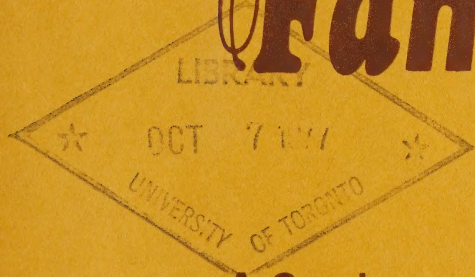


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# Think about the Family"



**A Seminar on the Family  
in Today's Society**

**May, 1977**



Ontario

Provincial  
Secretariat for  
Social Development



Our objective is to highlight the problems and dilemmas facing the family and to attempt to identify ways in which all of us – individuals, community volunteers, professionals and government – can assist in making family life a satisfying and enriching experience.

I believe that this will offer an excellent opportunity to review the responsibilities of government, social agencies and individuals for the well-being of the family. Government programs are usually intended to meet the needs of groups of people, such as children or the aged. However, the implications of these programs for the family cannot be ignored. Moreover, the role of the family in meeting its own responsibilities must be considered.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Margaret Birch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Margaret Birch,  
Provincial Secretary for  
Social Development



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## **Preface**

About 100 people were invited by the Government of Ontario to attend a one day seminar on the family in today's society. They represented private, voluntary and governmental social agencies, and were not only audience for the speakers and panelists, but also were contributors in exchanges of questions, comments and suggestions for action.

This booklet produced by the Provincial Secretariat for Social Development offers lengthy excerpts of the formal presentations with the focus on the key points raised. It also presents reaction and comments from members of the audience during open discussion sessions. The material is organized by themes rather than in the order in which it was presented to allow readers to better follow the many points raised on individual topics.

Excerpts from the papers of the keynote speakers, Dr. Michael Novak and Dr. Ivan Illich, are reprinted with permission of the authors. Their texts appear in full at the conclusion of the publication.

It is hoped that this booklet will help to circulate the information and the thought-provoking ideas offered during the seminar and stimulate more discussion and concern about the state of the family and its role now and in the future.

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## Speakers and Panelists were:

Morning Chairman,	Edward Ryan, Lawyer, Consultant to the Canadian Law Reform Commission.
Introduction:	The Honourable Margaret Birch, Provincial Secretary for Social Development.
Keynote Address:	Dr. Michael Novak, Author, Consultant, Professor of Philosophy and Religion.
Commentators,	Margaret Weiers, Editorial Writer, Editorial Board, The Toronto Star. Professor Ben Schlesinger, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto.
Speaker,	Dr. Ivan Illich, Author and Lecturer
Afternoon Chairman,	Dr. Moira Sansom, Professor of Social Psychology, Huron College.
Panelists,	Wayne Beach, Lawyer, Beach, Cancellara, Greenbaum, Lackie and Hepburn, Toronto. Anne Callagan, Professor, Department of Family Studies, University of Guelph. Bernard Daly, Researcher and Writer, Canadian Catholic Conference.



# Introduction

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**Margaret Birch**, Provincial Secretary for Social Development: Let me begin by stating the obvious. There is little doubt the family is changing.

Many have chronicled the change. But there are all too few answers as to how to halt the pattern so that we may pass on to future generations something of our values. I hope that you will have some of those answers.

I would like to focus on the role of government in the change we have observed.

I am deeply concerned that governments intervene too frequently and too willingly in family affairs. I am concerned that their policies, programs and services may often do more harm than good by creating a dependency on government rather than a self-reliance on finding solutions within the family relationship.

By trying to do too much – by becoming if you will a surrogate parent – does the state fragment already weak families and undermine their ability to rejuvenate? Should government be redirecting its efforts to more effectively helping family members to help themselves and each other?

Government intervention tends to zero in on specific family components – the troubled teenager, the senile grandparent, the single parent – and, in doing so, can forget to nurture the total family relationship.

In discussing the family, we tend to focus our attention most acutely on failures. Perhaps there is much we can learn from studying the successes.

Government funding incentives can be directed at maintaining the family as a healthy unit, rather than financing the debris of the broken family.

In Ontario we have made a start by integrating all services directed at helping children with special needs.

We have adopted the principle of providing family support services so that whenever possible, a child is to remain in his own environment, rather than being taken from his family and put in an institution.

We can direct our efforts and our funds so that more of the elderly are able to live with their families or in their own homes for as long as possible rather than being institutionalized.

We can do more to encourage the elderly to work with young children in the school system and more to encourage schools to welcome them.

The panelists and the speakers were selected to participate in this "Think About the Family" seminar, not because they were pro-government, but because the government did want those outside of government to have an opportunity to bring forth their personal views and the views of the many organizations they represent. This is exactly the kind of response that we wanted to have.



# Statistics and Trends

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*Among speakers, panelists and members of the audience, there was little disagreement concerning the continued strength of the family but considerable discussion on how changes in society are making an impact on that institution. There was also some questioning of what is meant by a family today. Longer life expectancies, the increasing participation by women in the labour force and the emergence of several family patterns were among the trends which received analysis and comment.*

**Hon. Margaret Birch:** I am a strong believer in the concept of family. And, I know I stand with the majority. There are some five million families functioning and thriving in Canada. About 190,000 couples get married in this country every year. They like the idea. They even like the idea of having children, although there are fewer children per family now than in the past.

Every year, approximately 45,000 couples in Canada marry for the second time – 65 per cent of them after a divorce and 35 per cent after the death of a spouse. The concept of marriage, of family, attracts them enough to try again.

And there are still more people who keep in touch with uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents, than turn their backs on kin for the shallow liberties of urban anonymity.

**Dr. Michael Novak:** I'd like to begin with two facts. The first one of great significance is that in the United States and, I believe closely paralleled in Canada, is that 66 per cent of all husbands and wives do stay together until "death doth them part".

The figure 66 per cent is remarkable in itself, but more so in the sort of society in which we live. Nowadays, given the miracle of modern medicine, it takes so much longer for "death to doth part" people. It was one thing to

pledge your troth until death when the average age of death was 38, 39, 40. It's totally different today when the average woman will live to 72 or 73 and the oppressive male until 67 or 68. It means that one is marrying someone, in effect, for two or three lifetimes – for youth and the having of children, the nurturing of children, and for a middle period of work, and for a significant period in which both partners are likely to be in a career quite different from the career they had in their middle years.

The second figure I'd like to mention is that some 78 per cent of all divorced couples – again the figure is from the United States but I believe it's even exceeded by figures in Canada, remarry. That too is remarkable. There is absolutely no doubt about the survival of the family. The only question is with what health and with what moral power and what direction it will continue.

I want to remark that there are many kinds of families. Perhaps that doesn't need stressing yet we must not think that there is one sort of family.

Both the United States and Canada are composed of more than 100 cultures each. In the United States, the number is closer to 138. (There's some doubt whether to count Texas as a different culture.) One of the differentiating points of a culture is that particular complex chemistry of family life within which male and female roles are understood differently and relationships between parents and children differ and the demonstration of emotions is along different lines. It is very important when thinking about the family to remember that we are talking about an analogous reality, in some ways different in many different cultures. We mustn't imagine we can get it all straight by thinking in the terms of one culture only.

**Prof. Anne Callagan:** The major demographic factors which affect the family's ability to care for its members are the changing age structure and the increasing participation of women in the labour force. In spite of a good life expectancy in Canada, because of a high birth rate as well as immigration, the age structure of our population has been, and still is, younger than that of most European nations. The proportion of our population over 65 years remained constant at seven per cent between 1951 and 1970 while in England during the same period (1950-70) the percentage rose from 10.9 per cent to 13 per cent. However, by 2001, Statistics Canada projections estimate that those aged 65 or more will represent somewhere between approximately

10 per cent and over 12 per cent of the population (depending on assumptions regarding fertility, mortality and immigration).

A recent analysis of population dependency ratios – that is the proportion of those in the work force as against those too old or young to work – by Joan Brown for the Canadian Council on Social Development reassured Canadians that the percentage of those in the work force will alter little during the present century. However, the number of dependent children will diminish and the number of dependent aged increase. Additionally, this analysis pointed out that the number of people over 65 is expected to rise from 1,744,000 in 1971 to 3,103,000 in 2001 and that those over 75 years will make up a significant proportion of this increase.

These figures may be looked at in conjunction with statistics concerning female labour force participation.

Analysis of trends during this century shows that in the earlier decades single women increasingly participated in the labour force, while since World War II, as we all know, we have seen a dramatically increased entry of married women in the labour force – only just over four per cent of married women being in the labour force in 1941, but one out of every three married women working outside the home by 1971, and a continuous increase in their numbers since then. In addition, a recent study indicates that younger women are taking much less time out for their child rearing years and are much more closely attached to the labour force.

In the past, women have not only been key figures in the maintenance of kinship ties, but also have been the members of the family who have taken the most responsibility for nurturance of those in need. The two major demographic trends just noted suggest that even if as has been shown, most elderly persons enjoy moderately good health, there will be an increase in the number of old persons needing assistance, while those who have traditionally given this may be less available. A new problem, too, is arising with the existence now of a growing number of the elderly whose children are themselves retired and have diminished physical and other resources.

**Prof. Ben Schlesinger:** When we talk about the family, who are we talking about? We have several family patterns in our country and therefore it is





Prof. Ben Schlesinger

dangerous to put the husband, wife and children as the ideal family type. The first is the two-parent family and, of course, most of the population – roughly 90 per cent – live in two-parent family homes.

Then there is what I call the one-and-a-half parent family. The one-and-a-half parent family has never appeared in any literature. It is a family, for example, of the military, of the travelling salesman, of the husband who is away a lot where one parent is at home and the other comes in and out . . . . We don't really know how many of those we have.

There is the one-parent family. At this time, nearly every tenth Canadian family is headed by a single parent. Of these half a million families, 80 per cent are headed by women and 20 per cent by men. This family unit is growing.

Then there is what I call the multi-parent family. The multi-parent family is the small group in a communal situation where four or five couples live together with their children.

There's another group that we never talk about. I call it the uni-parent family. The uni-parent family is the single person who adopts. I didn't know what term to use, but in the future there will be many more Canadians, single people, who will adopt. This is to me a uni-parent family.

Then we have the reconstituted family. In this country roughly 18 per cent of all marriages in the past few years involved people marrying for the second time. So the reconstituted family or the blended family, as it is called, is growing.

Finally, there's the family for which there's reference in the family law (reform proposals), two people who live together for two years. If there is a law there must be recognition that it's a family pattern.

I submit that all of these are approaches to family life. All of them are ways

that Canadians are seeking to live in families and therefore we shouldn't think of only the couple with children as the ideal family.

Let's look at some trends in this country and see what's really happening to the family. The first thing is more women are in the labour force and it's very dangerous to make the statement that it's women who are the cause for unemployment. I hear this time and time again from men who say it's because of women we're experiencing eight per cent unemployment. I suggest you look at the jobs women now are taking. If they all go home tomorrow, men would never take these jobs. Would men want to be a waitress at Murrays? What man wants to sew the clothes on Spadina? What man wants to be the girl out there that served the coffee? It's a myth.

And fascinating, isn't it, that in this country where at the moment 37 per cent of the labour force are women, of those, 60 per cent are married women with children. When we look at what's happened to their kids, we find that those full-time married women who have to work – most have to work – it's a myth that they're enjoying themselves and raising their consciousness. Most have to work and therefore someone has to look after their kids. And what do we find – three per cent of all the kids under five who need some sort of child care, three per cent are in day care. By the way, I'm not a proponent of day care. I don't know where the others are. Where are these kids and who's looking after them? It's an interesting question.

Canadian women are marrying later and are having fewer children. There's another interesting family trend. The largest increase in single parent families, percentage-wise in this country and the United States has been among the single mother and child – the non-married girl, the non-married woman. You notice I'm not using unmarried. The new term is non-married. Every eleventh baby in this country for the past three years has been born to a single mother. Roughly 32,000 babies per year are born to single mothers. Of the 32,000, 40 per cent of the mothers are under the age of 19 and 85 per cent of these mothers are keeping their children to form a new family pattern. We have to look at that also and what affect that has on family life and how do we deal with that.

**Dr. Vivian Rakoff**, Clarke Institute of Psychiatry: I think that at least in one aspect of today's discussion we're all engaged in an irrelevancy, because the family doesn't require defence – it will exist. It exists in all human societies in one form or the other in the same way that language exists in all human

societies as an essential attribute of our social being. We require more or less permanent propinquity and we do live in multi-generational societies and we do have children and we all dread loneliness. Given those facts there is, despite the amazing protean variety of families that anthropologists have been bombarding us with for 100 to 200 years, that unit of humans coming together recognized everywhere.

**Pamela Cluff**, Ontario Welfare Council: I would like the panel to respond to the dynamics of change in expectations of individuals within the family including the children. Many children in Canada . . . are children of immigrant families and almost immediately they become part of the social milieu of the educational system or with their peer groups they find that their personal values begin to change and can be, in fact, in conflict with the parents that have raised them. So we set up a dynamic problem of exchange with the parent almost from the time the child enters the school system and becomes an operating member of society. Many children we know will reject all of their parents' values and subsequently in their twenties and thirties will come back and re-evaluate their parents' values and find something there for themselves. But initially, there is a great deal of rejection and I think these emotional linkages are crucial to the support of the child in the early year. I would really like to hear some response about the dynamics of exchange between children who are faced with a future different from their parents'.



# Perspectives

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*Does the danger exist of looking at family patterns in past generations through a sentimental haze? This question was asked repeatedly by speakers as they presented an historical perspective to the discussion in an effort to eliminate some of the distortion in currently-held views.*

*The audience was also cautioned not to accept unquestioningly the views of opinion-makers and experts who personally experience special family problems which might distort their perceptions.*

*One panelist, Bernard Daly, representing the Canadian Catholic Conference, presented his paper from the perspective of a commentator writing early in the next century.*

**Dr. Michael Novak:** Most of our language about the family and about everything else for that matter, comes through the top 10 per cent of the population, in income, in education, in professional work . . . . Almost all of those in the media and in the universities, almost all the leaders of public discussions, almost all the opinion-makers, almost all the opinion-leaders, come from this class – the top 10 per cent. And it is precisely in this class that marriage is under peculiar strains, special strains. (For them) the rearing of children is exceedingly difficult, with absentee fathers – absent as much as fathers in the ghetto – and many other strains. So our image of what is happening in the family often becomes influenced by what is happening in the families of those who give us the images. That's one source of distortion, not unimportant.

A second source is that neither in our liberal nor in our conservative tradition . . . is there a well worked out political philosophy of the family. We have been much better in talking about the individual and in talking about the state. About the family there is only a very small body of theory, indeed. It surely is the single most under-studied major institution in our midst. The church has been studied more, the labour unions have been studied more, government has been studied more, individuals have been studied more. Everybody takes the family for granted. Worse than that, both from a liberal

and conservative view, in certain respects, the family has been something of – let me not say an enemy – but a force of opposition against which to define oneself. In liberal thought quite commonly, the family is looked upon as a source of prejudice, bias, habit and custom which ought to be replaced by more enlightened attitudes, methods and procedures. Quite often, reform movements are directed in effect against family upbringing . . . and quite commonly the liberal looks toward the federal government or the state for the source of more enlightenment and progress.

On the other side, at least implicitly, while there has been a kind of praise of the family in the conservative tradition, the emphasis has fallen on the individual, even the rugged individual, the self-reliant individual. Here, too, the family has been looked upon often as a force rather inhibiting and holding back the individual – an institution from which the individual must break in order to exert her own independence.

**Margaret Weiers:** The kind of intimate, human relationship that's called for in family life is hard to cultivate. Yet I wonder, was it ever easy to be a parent or a spouse? Are the strains on family life greater today than they were in our grandparents day or just different? From our urban perspective now we tend to look at family life of the past through a sentimental haze.

If you want some insight into the realities of family life past, take a walk through the small cemetery that was reconstructed at Upper Canada village and see how many men are buried beside two young wives and several infant children. Granted, there weren't as many divorces or separations in the Ontario of our parents or grandparents days. Families stayed together for sheer survival. That doesn't necessarily mean they were warm, loving, secure and stable. They may have been, and no doubt some of them were, quarrelsome and brutal, destructive to body and spirit. In such a family atmosphere, divorce is surely therapeutic for both spouses and children.

Of course, one of the problems then, as now, was that people aren't trained to be parents. Despite the mystique of motherhood propagated by churchmen and politicians, advertisers and obstetricians most of them male, I might add, competence at being a parent doesn't flow with mother's milk. So I am not despondent when I hear that some couples today decided not to have children. I just hope they're not the ones who would be, in fact, the most competent parents. It seems to me that if we really believe the family is the cornerstone of society, we must stop merely saying so and start doing positive things to strengthen family life.

**Prof. Ben Schlesinger:** When in history has the family ever had power? They

never were free. The family has much more power today, the individual has much more power today, than ever before in this country. And as I know my history, never before have individuals had rights in the family, to do their own thing, whatever that means. We cannot go back to the good-old-bad days. The family in the Depression didn't have unemployment insurance. Our social security programs, including family allowances, unemployment insurance, health insurance, youth allowance, education grants, strengthen the family. To go back and say that some of these are spoiling the family, I think is in a sense, an old fascist view.

**Prof. Anne Callagan:** In this century the welfare and utility of the family has been a matter of fluctuating debate, on the part both of social scientists and of laymen. The controversy began with the recognition of the fact that as our society became increasingly urbanized and industrialized, many tasks traditionally performed by the family, such as the education of children or the nursing of the sick, became the major responsibility of other social institutions. This was interpreted by some as being part of a progressive loss of function by the family, and observers predicted the ultimate disintegration of the family. As late as 1941 in a census monograph for the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Dr. Enid Charles inserted into a rather dry statistical tract a passionate plea to families to return to traditional ways before race suicide occurred. However some sociologists, led by Talcott Parsons, argued that North American society had evolved a pared down "nuclear family" centered on the marital bond, which was uniquely fitted to our mobile technological way of life. Parsons argued that the family was as important as ever, but, like other contemporary social institutions, was more specialized and that the family's two major functions were now the socialization of children and the provision of a milieu in which emotional support and affection could be exchanged between members.

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This points out the dual responsibility of governments and families to contribute to the welfare of family members. It is not good enough to look back nostalgically at the past with the fantasy that before the existence of massive government help, all families looked after their own members, and there was little suffering.

It is true that help was often more readily available for better-off families. In 1921 for instance, the ratio of servants to household was one to every 21 households, and practical nurses as well as registered private nurses were plentiful too. As late as 1938, a competent young registered nurse was hired for an asthmatic patient at \$18 for a six-day week of constant 12-hour night



duty. But the extra help with which moderately well-off families could readily augment their own resources depended on less fortunate families whose members were often forced to take any position in the absence of other income.

Today in a much more affluent society, with humane income supports for the needy, and remuneration for nurses which reflects their level of skill, there is no pool of disadvantaged individuals which can be used to supplement cheaply the resources of families themselves. Last year just one visit a day through the week by the VON in our district, together with an eight-hour daily weekdays homemakers service – that would be five days a week – would have cost over \$1,000 if it had been provided to one family for a month.

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If research in kinship and aging fails to support fears concerning the disintegration of kin systems and the abandonment of the elderly, one might ask why there is continuing concern in these areas? There seem to be several explanations. Firstly, there are some isolated individuals, and their distress may be acute, and their needs salient to those who come into contact with them – and they may be over-represented among agency clientele. A second explanation is the fact that kinship literature is more comprehensive on quantitative issues – counts of interaction and types of aid, measurements of proximity and so forth – and there are fewer studies focussing on qualitative matters. Critics have pointed to this lack, and suggested that duty and affection may not go together, and limited research in this area has substantiated their concern. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, even if evidence does not support a conclusion that there have been widespread problems in the past, the structure both of our society and of our family system is changing, and these changes may herald increasing problems in the future.

**Bernard Daly:** I have written what purports to be a newspaper article for 25 years from today, May 10, 2002. And it purports to follow on a parliamentary commission on Canadian Family Life that had reported about a month earlier. In large measure it grows out of our inter-church experience in looking at the Canadian scene in the last few years and above all reflects my personal conviction that social changes don't just evolve in the sense of trends but grow out of deliberate choices of people that have the power to make their choices come true. (Following are excerpts from that article.)

It became clear to all Canadians in the late 1970s that they really were not "masters of their own destiny". They were being socialized to accept roles designed to keep the wheel of income and spending going as fast as possible. But the resulting political economy was not satisfying real needs – housing, jobs, affordable prices.

Whose vision of society would shape a different kind of social order?

The search, as last month's Report on Canadian Family Life shows, has led to a commitment to social patterns that put the realities of human relationships, especially those of the family, ahead of such economic sentiments as competition, grasping and gain.

That is, the Commission has recorded a consensus in favour of a call by the Vanier Institute of the Family during the 1970s for replacing industrial society with a familial society – one in which the characteristics of personal relationships that encourage persons fully to live and to love will be the shapers of our social relationships and structures.

People thus have rediscovered, and intend to give everyday expression to, a suggestion by Pierre Elliott Trudeau – that the concept of net human benefit be substituted for that of gross national product as the yardstick of how society is faring.

As more and more Canadians began to see that the questions to be solved for everyday living usually are not at all technical, complex or mysterious, a whole new dimension of participatory democracy began to unfold. It became increasingly possible to imagine questions being solved around family dinner tables instead of in a few boardrooms.



Bernard Daly

Thus began the movement, urged at the 1977 Ontario family seminar, of families seizing responsibilities back from the government, from industry, from the schools, from technicians and professionals and bureaucrats.

Another key to recovery of control over their own lives by Canadians was a new perspective on work. On the one hand, the popularity of such activities as cross-country skiing and bicycling stirred in Canadians a growing realization that the word "automobile" applied properly not to energy-devouring vehicles but to the capacity and willingness to move oneself by one's own effort.

More fundamental and far-reaching, perhaps, was the perceptual breakthrough that followed when popular economist Barbara Ward gave the name "energy slaves" to our labour-saving devices. This revealed that what saved

us work were not “free goods” of industrial progress but things we enjoyed at the cost of the enslavement of hundreds of fellow beings deprived of the resources used to produce our gadgets and comforts.

As unemployment mounted in the late 1970s it became clearer that a central concern of development policy for Canada – as for so-called less developed countries – must be the creation of work opportunities for those who, being unemployed, were consumers without contributing anything to the fund of either “wage goods” or “capital”.

The debate over the Mackenzie pipeline in the mid-1970s brought to Canadians an awareness that this country’s resources and citizens were marked for exploitation. And so, more and more people began to say: Is this the kind of future we want for ourselves and our children’s children – to be so rich yet so dependent?

What followed is more recent history. The Report on Canadian Family Life itself reviews the study and debate that preceded the decision on the Committee’s focus and title. Selection of the self-reliant family as the social unit by which to measure social efforts was but a logical step in the process of rethinking that was under way.

Besides aiming to give families a political dimension in Canada, the report calls for restoration or formation of local community life in communities redesigned to bring home and work closer together; improved functioning of political and industrial democracy; decentralization of alternative methods of production, using new forms of appropriate technology; increasing self-reliance for minority groups; and new national and international organisms for co-operation and sharing.

Above all, there comes through the report a profound awareness of R.H. Tawney’s insight that if economic ambitions are good servants, they are bad masters. Hence it concludes with his words:

“The most obvious facts are most easily forgotten. Both the existing economic order and too many of the projects advanced for reconstructing it break down through their neglect of the truism that, since even quite common men have souls, no increase in material wealth will compensate them for arrangements which insult their self-respect and impair their freedom. A reasonable estimate of economic organization must allow for the fact that, unless industry is to be paralyzed by recurrent revolts on the part of outraged human nature, it must satisfy criteria which are not purely economic”.



# Family's Place in Society

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*The family's place in society, according to the speakers, is many-sided.*

*To Dr. Michael Novak, the family is primarily a mediating institution standing between the individual and the state. He speaks of new promise of recognition of this role.*

*To Dr. Ivan Illich, the family sadly has become a consumer unit, "a consumption unit determined by the size of an ice box".*

**Dr. Michael Novak:** I do believe it is fair to say that both the intellectual tradition of speaking about the family and a tradition of political philosophy which would suggest how we ought to think politically about the family, are vastly underdeveloped. However, I think that we will see over the next decade among liberals for certain, and among conservatives as well, a major turn towards the family and other mediating institutions.

By the term "mediating institution" I mean all those institutions which stand between the naked, solitary individual and the state – the state which, everywhere, in socialist as well as liberal regimes is growing stronger every day, more omnipotent, penetrating into every corner of our lives. Mediating institutions are those institutions so much neglected in our political theory. They are not mentioned, for example, in the Constitution of the United States. Family is not mentioned – the individual is, the state is – but neither the family nor the neighbourhood is mentioned.

Nevertheless, over the next 10 years I'm quite confident that the direction (for liberals) will be to try to enlarge our understanding of, and our methods for enabling those mediating institutions, without which strong individuals cannot be formed and without which there are no checks upon the power of the state.

And for obvious and concomitant reasons, I believe conservative thought

will turn increasingly in this direction as well. If one does wish to defend and to enlarge the scope of action of the strong and self-reliant individual, one has to confront the fact that such individuals must be shaped in families and in human networks, otherwise they just don't happen. Otherwise the lonely, solitary individual becomes simply part of the lonely crowd, battered about by the power of the mass media and of the government.

So from both the conservative and liberal direction, and I don't mean in terms of convergence but in terms of concentration of attention, I believe the family and other mediating institutions will come higher and higher on the public agenda. They have to, for the survival of everything we stand for.

**Dr. Ivan Illich:** That which we call a family today, a consumer unit, a consumption unit, determined by the size of an icebox, has no precedent in history. Family in a commodity-intensive society is something different from the family in any other society in the world.

As somebody who has lived now for 20 years in Latin America . . . I get frightened when I hear that people want to strengthen the family because in every single instance during the last 17 years in which a torturing technofascist government took over in Latin America, it did so within a week or two of a major public manifestation, usually organized by the church, in favour of strengthening family life.

In only a few decades, the world has become an amalgam. Human responses to everyday occurrences have been standardized everywhere. The world has been standardized. The human family today has become the task of ministries and UNESCOs. Twenty years ago, UNESCO in its large meeting in Santiago defined as the major obstacle to development in Latin America, the unwillingness of parents to send their children to schools. Only seven years later, the same UNESCO commission said that there was an eleven-times more demand for places in the classroom than classroom space available. Propagation of the family without educational input – how much of it do you have? Let me measure it – think a step back – and it does not only mean a return to the jungle for most people, it means poverty. The standardization of expectations in response grow, while autonomous action and hopeful trust decline.

Development, or modernization has had the same effect in all societies. Everywhere, so-called progress has enmeshed people in a new web of dependence on commodities. Everywhere, these have come to replace what

people had done – although differently in each culture – to cope outside the market. And everywhere this substitution of use-values by commodities has extinguished the ability, the will and most often, most conditions for a reversal of this trend. As the volume and number of commodities increased, the different cultures have become insipid, look-alike residues . . . . And what I say about culture in general, I can say very specifically about what we place in the category of family and family life.

Late industrial society has organized life dogmatically around commodities and this has transformed the family from the basic cell for use-value generation – for things people do and make without any eye on how or where to exchange it – into the basic unit for consumption. I can warn there are very many pitfalls through which a meeting like this, with all good intentions, can be used to make the family into a more effective consumer of standardized education, health care, etc. than you ever could do with government supervision.

In the progressive substitution, of use-values by commodities, ever larger pieces of our lives have been so transformed that life itself has become to depend almost exclusively on commodities sold on the world market. The fact that these commodities, such as school years, passenger miles, hysterectomies or baby formula are allocated here by the wisdom of pricing and there by the wisdom of planners does not change their nature as commodities.

To make one's own house, to grow one's own food or to bicycle to work, become, in such a society, the privileges of some deviants – more often than not, of the idle rich. That is, useful unemployment is more socially biased in favour of the rich than income. And this seems to me the main issue for discussion, before we dream about the possibility of families surviving in a commodity-intensive society.

This addiction to paralyzing affluence, once it becomes encrusted in a culture, generates, for a lack of another name – what I would call “modernized poverty”. And the family in such a society becomes the fundamental sink into which modernized poverty sediments. I propose this term of “modernized poverty” to designate a form of disvalue that is necessarily associated with the escalation of proliferation of industrial commodities. The specific disutility of industrial production, that is of commodity prevalence, has escaped the attention of economists because it consists of loss of use-values that economic measurements generally disregard.



In a society where people cannot make, but must always buy what they need, need itself changes its character. When people need what they still can make, needs are shaped by the remembrance of past satisfaction obtained from personal action – by doing something. When people need what they cannot make, and this is our situation, and their needs are determined by the ever-changing expert prescription of what is good for them, needs are shaped by salesmen rather than by recourse to memory. Increasingly, people are forced to appease their needs even though they don't get from it any memorable satisfaction.

What is worse, people now sense that they have introduced, with every purchase, a new need for commodities into their personal lives and thereby have lost the ability to fend quite happily for themselves. And when I speak about commodities, I speak about goods and services alike. The new addiction has modernized another facet of their poverty. And if we continue to speak about the family as the basic agency for education, we only decentralize need-making by engaging parents as para-professional educators.

As a consequence of this progressive substitution of commodities for autonomous competence, both needs and wants have acquired a character for which there is no historical precedent. For the first time, needs have become almost exclusively coterminous with commodities. Society has turned into a conditioning system that trains people to need what the market offers and not to want what cannot be bought. And the family is increasingly conceived, even by those who speak about its strengthening, as a basic unit in which retraining takes place.

My assumption is that an alternate form of modernity is possible. It is not necessary that technical progress be mainly placed at the service of increasing commodity outputs be they goods or services. The technical developments of the last 100 years can be equally well placed in the hands of people to produce use-values in what is called the domestic mode of production.

# Is Family Important?

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*There was no question among the various speakers as to the importance of the family but some disagreement arose as to the importance of different family patterns.*

*Dr. Michael Novak said special attention should be paid those members of society willing to take up the task of raising children. On the other hand, Prof. Ben Schlesinger came to the defence of childless couples.*

*Dr. Novak also saw the family as a moral force for the individual and stressed that advances in science and studies in human behaviour have shown that the family is more important than it was previously imagined. Margaret Weiers said one strain on family life is that neither government nor business and industry consider it half as important as growth in the gross national product.*

**Dr. Michael Novak:** The first point I want to make in answer to "Why the family?" is that the future of the human race utterly depends on the family and upon those members of society willing to take part in the nourishment of children. Not all are.

When you talk on a college campus now, many students, at least publicly, are quite uncertain about whether they want to marry, and are speculating whether if they do marry, they should have children. If you speak to them in favour of marriage, and above all in favour of children, their mouths gape. Some feel quite personally, quite individually, a resistance to family life and to children. Consequently we do see the achievement of zero population growth.

But its inverse effect is to substitute dogs, kittens, gerbels, monkeys and pythons, for children in the homes of the single and childless. The multiplication of pets, especially in the United States, is staggering. What we are not having in children we are having in pets. I doubt that we have achieved zero population growth; only of the human of the species.

In any case, the first point I want to make to “Why the family?” is this – unless we have children there isn’t any future. It’s very simple. And unless we have children who are brought up in environment with a certain quality, the promise of our future is much diminished. And, therefore, we have to pay special attention to those members of society – even if it is not all members of society – who do take up the task of the future, who do nurture children. We have an absolutely profound interest in what is done by such citizens, more so than what is done by other citizens who choose not to have families.

The second point is that the advances of science over the last 30 years in their investigations into every manner of human behaviour, as such behaviour springs from the family, have in every case shown that the family is even more important than we had imagined. Everything we have learned in every field of science reinforces the centrality and the importance of family and of what happens in it. If you talk about nutrition, we discovered that not only does it matter what mother and father feed the child, it matters what the mother was doing during pregnancy. It’s certain that if proteins and other nutritional values were not there, brain damage can result. We discovered that I.Q. is very much affected by the kind of activity that surrounds the infant. We know that if you teach children how to identify letters, to sound those letters with their lips, to identify those sounds and shapes with letters on a printed page, to combine those letters into words, and to identify words, they know how to read even before they go to school. If they are, as we say, motivated, it’s very easy for teachers. If children don’t come out of the family with such appetites, what can teachers do?

If you want one simple reason, one direct reason why there was so much antagonism toward family, and toward having children, I think it is directly related, although unconsciously related, to how much we know about the importance of family and children. It’s terrifying to know in how many ways you can fail. And I would say that quite vividly in my own mind, I have learned nothing so much in being a father, as a steady and persistent sense of failure. I never seem to understand exactly what is on the children’s mind until it’s too late, and I always bawl them out on occasions when I realize after that that was not the time to do it. And I let them get away with murder that I don’t recognize as murder until it’s been done.

Let me add just one more point. In terms of care for the young, the very young, for the needy and for the elderly, we’ve also learned that if the family



guards this well, there is no need for state intervention. We've learned that it can be done infinitely cheaper if it's done by the family. In New York State it costs as much as \$10,000, \$12,000 and even \$16,000 dollars a year per person to care for a child, the elderly or retarded in various homes. A family can take care of many such persons from the family's own midst, far more cheaply than that – for an additional \$1,000 or \$2,000 or \$3,000. Often the family does not get that additional. It does its work by dividing what it already has.

Not only can it be done more cheaply but it can also be done with a quality of affection and care that you cannot pay for – that no price in the world commands. And by affection and care when I speak of the family, I do not mean – I repeat – NOT mean love and tenderness. Much of what one gets in the family is, in fact, hostility, abrupt disagreement. Family love is by no means tender. In fact, I believe that in this modern age we are so mobile and we live in that marvelous circumstance in which we can choose our own friends, so that when we go to parties or go out in the evening, it's by and large with people we know and like and with whose ideas we agree. The only place remaining in such a society where diversity is brought together, where you can sit down at the dinner table with people you abhor, whose opinions you cannot tolerate and whose views on society we cannot stomach is with the family on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. The family is the only place in society where people from different social classes and different backgrounds still are obliged to get together.

The third point I want to make “Why the family?” is a more difficult one and it has to do with what we are coming to learn about the **moral** quality of married life, first, and family life, second. Let me talk about the importance for the soul of marriage. I would argue that one of the most important motivations in the sense of being structural, is the ruthless and relentless honesty and realism that one encounters in another partner. If you do not like honesty, if you do not like someone telling you exactly why you're chewing your lip as you are or why you're talking in that tone of voice again, or why you're playing that role again, don't get married.

The great moral advantage of being married is that you cannot get away from yourself. There's that other person pinning you against the wall with all your familiar moves. Things you did, even as a little child – looks, little humble glances, bluffs – that partner knows and, worse, insists on telling you.

It's not like living with a friend or a roommate who has an interest in presenting the better side of you to yourself. It's much more desperate and dangerous than that. Both partners are basically struggling for a kind of survival and often being very harsh with one another.

It's important to stress it because on the other side, contemporary liberties, what we call liberation, the continually self-liberating life, can be a form of "kid-ship". It is really possible in our society to go into your thirties never holding a permanent job, receiving unemployment cheques in Arizona, working for twenty-some weeks and then taking off. It's possible to be a kid forever.

We look ten years younger than we are, all of us, if you look at pictures of previous generations. The ravages of age told much more quickly on them. But not only do we look like kids, we act more and more like kids. And there are not a few kids aged 50 around. You don't have to grow up.

What I'm trying to say is that one of the beauties in modern freedom is that you do not have to grow up, you do not have to accept what we consider the normal responsibilities for the human race – economic responsibility, sexual and familial responsibility. You can evade these. I'm not trying to say we should take these away. I'm trying to argue that it is well worth pointing out to those who are concerned about moral growth and about maturing under adverse conditions, that marriage and the having of children is an extraordinary asset.

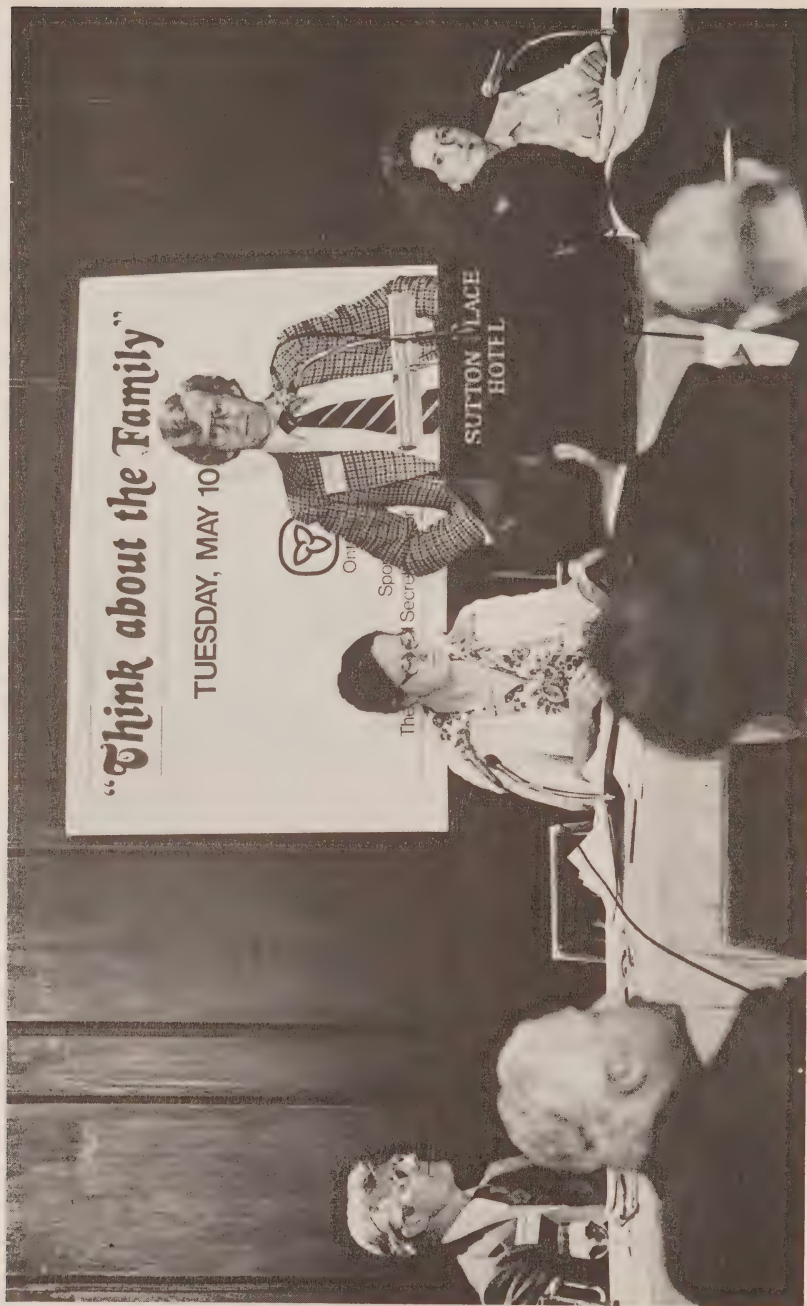
**Prof. Ben Schlesinger:** In the 1971 census 24 per cent of Canadian families were couples without children. I think we should encourage that. I think we should encourage young people who have opted on a voluntary basis to remain childless, rather than dump on them guilt for the fact that they are childless. I find the ones that are most dumping it on these childless couples are persons who have four children and are having such a hard time. Those of us who have children get so uptight that others are not following our pattern. It's the first time in Canadian history that there is a viable option for young Canadians. Twenty years ago, the pressure was such that you were asked when you were married, "When are you going to have a family?". The assumption was that you were not a family. Now, I'm very glad to say, childless couples, non-parents, are a viable option and I say, "God bless them". I'm not worried about the fact that we're not going to have any children. Births are fine in this country.



Margaret Weiers

**Margaret Weiers:** One of the greater strains on family life today is that neither government nor business and industry consider it half as important as growth in the gross national product. If a company moves its head office from Montreal to Toronto the employees must go with it if they want to keep their jobs. The family, whether it likes it or not, does have to adapt. Yet we know that moving can cause great stress in human relationships and can be a traumatic experience for both adults and children. We also know that, in any given five-year period 50 per cent of Canadians move, most of them to another part of the province or to another province. That can mean much uprooting for families.





About 100 people attended the May 10 seminar in Toronto. The afternoon panel discussion was chaired by Dr. Moira

Sansom (centre). Other panelists left to right are: Bernard Daly, Wayne Beach and Prof. Anne Callagan.

# When Government Steps In

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*Government financial assistance to families, both direct and indirect, was generally applauded by the speakers and panelists. There was no suggestion that cutbacks be made.*

*Instead, the focus of criticism was in those areas where it was perceived that governments have not provided sufficient financial or program assistance.*

*At the same time, government was urged to act only indirectly and the caution was raised that there are limits to what might be achieved through legislation.*

*Dr. Ivan Illich warned of three dangers he saw in the formulation of a family policy.*

**Dr. Michael Novak:** The third series of remarks I'd like to make concerns the relationship of the family and the state. I'd like to think of these for the moment as the family against the state. I think that's the most accurate way to bracket the actual circumstance at the moment.

We need to make room for the family and we have to do it against the state. By the state I don't mean only the government itself, but the culture too – that almost quasi-official culture, such things as television, and the ideology within which our children grow up and in which we ourselves must grow up.

The government role is often crucial because we live in a highly industrial and technical society in which long-range decisions are made in a long-range way so the government necessarily becomes involved in the family. If the government puts a thru-way in here and moves certain homes, that has effect. If it puts its energy on high-level technology, that affects families. The government is involved. There's no way it's not going to be.

In order to strengthen the family under the new circumstances it's very

important that the government role be indirect in the way that a novelist's role, with characters in the novel, must be indirect. If the novelist moves the characters in the novel too directly, the characters are wooden; they cease to live. If the novelist enables the characters, gives them freedom and autonomy of their own, if they become agents in overcoming suffering; the characters live. I think the same thing is true in a society.

The role of a creator in society has to be quite indirect. It has to be an enabling role. What one must do is to provide liberty for families and as in a novel, liberty means possible failure. You can't prevent failures. The minute you try to remove all evils from the world, you bring to bear a tremendous power of coercion. You couldn't eliminate all the evils in the world without putting a soldier behind everybody at all hours, at all times and that itself would generate an evil even more vast.

**Margaret Weiers:** In Ontario in 1971, there were 165,265 single parent families; 131,607 of them headed by women. How does public policy in Ontario help strengthen family life when it's already weakened by the absence of one parent?

In theory, Ontario gives the single mother the choice of working or staying at home and caring for her children. If she chooses to stay at home, she's eligible for family benefits allowances. But what does it say about the adequacy of such allowances when the maximum monthly benefit for a mother with one child is \$338 while the foster family, caring for the teen-age ward of a children's aid society, gets about \$233 a month? The single mother has no income but that \$338. The foster family adds the \$233 to whatever wages or salaries are coming in.

I wonder, too, how concerned the Ontario government is about preserving the family when it requires a woman applying for public assistance to file a court charge for maintenance and child support against her estranged husband. The husband might still want to retain a relationship with his children. Is he going to be able to do that after being hauled into court?

Indeed, despite politicians' pronouncements about the importance of the family and family life, it often seems to me that they are prepared to spend money to pick up the pieces when family life falls apart while being unwilling to invest some in keeping families together. How else accounts for the fact



that the (provincial government) will pay the bill if the troubled youngster falls afoul of the law and is sent to training school but tells the municipality it must pay, if the youngster is sent to a group home instead?

**Dr. Vivian Rakoff**, Clarke Institute of Psychiatry: What does concern me is the terrible realization that ideologies do indeed affect our ways of personal and inter-personal being and that one of the dangers of ideologies is that yesterday's progressive notion is today's reactionary one. And yesterday's freedom is today's tyranny. And things that are proposed for our good and our liberalization have got to be watched very carefully for what they're going to do when they're released into the stream.

But I do know that when it comes to governmental action, that whatever they do, it's going to go wrong because there was never a good time in history. The only thing we can preserve, I think, is the right to be in constant dispute about these matters.

Because when it comes to the family, there is no legislation that can tell us how to be human, and there is no legislation that can tell us very definitely how to be parents.

The most important thing that I think perhaps covers the varieties of human family; a concern for older people; the concern for younger people; the concern for all kinds of human cuddling; is that we have won, despite the disadvantages of the last couple of hundred years . . . a concern which, I think, does give direction to government policy and to our thinking. Namely, that every person no matter who he is, and what life he or she chooses for themselves, is entitled to certain fundamental rights of personality and self-determination. That these things often carry with them tragic consequence and possible loneliness we accept. But it does allow us to support varieties of human experience and to be concerned with the young. My feeling is that the best way for government to act is to make available to everyone, the economic rights and privileges that we have in our society and that no one, no matter what the human configuration is, should be deprived of these things.

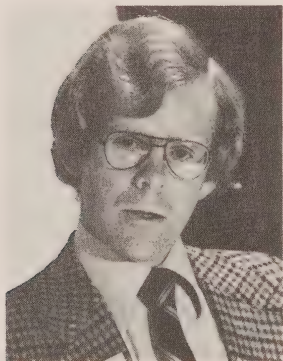
**Wayne Beach**: Because of the serious economic burden which children represent to individual family units and because of the importance of children in our society, the state has intervened to ease the burden of child bearing.

In the past, this intervention was carried out more from a sense of fair play to assist members of the society who were carrying an unreasonable burden or to protect the welfare of children. Little was needed in the past to stimulate child bearing. In fact, the reverse was true; active measures were undertaken to encourage family planning or, in other words to reduce family sizes in order to curb population growth.

However, now with effective birth control devices available, with the different attitudes to the role of women in society and to the family and with the decline of traditional religious beliefs, the birth rate has declined dramatically and will probably decline even more. It may actually become necessary for the state to provide rewards for child bearing in order to induce families to have children.

The present situation with regard to government assistance to families with children is as follows:

Family Allowance payments have recently been increased to a level of nearly \$300 per year for small children. However, the increases were off-set in many cases by the fact that family allowance payments became taxable. There is no logical reason why the state should provide an allowance to a family to assist it in raising its children and then subject the assistance to tax. The bookkeeping involved is expensive and completely unproductive. Presumably, the allowances were made taxable in order to subject them to the progressive income tax rate system ensuring that the rich do not receive the same amount as the poor.



Wayne Beach

In the area of income tax relief, the tax deduction for a non-working spouse, now in the range of \$2,000, is not strictly applicable to families with children. However, the majority of married women without children will be working and, as a result, their husbands will not qualify for this deduction. It is often pointed out, that because the personal exemption claim for an individual is larger than the claim which may be made for a non-working spouse, it is more advantageous for a mother to work than to stay at home. Presumably, the difference between the two exemption claims is not significant enough to affect a

mother's decision to work. However, the married status exemption certainly provides no incentive for a mother to remain at home.

In 1976, the deduction for dependent children under age 16 was \$390; for those who had reached age 16, the deduction was \$720. Many commentators suggest that this deduction is too small to provide sufficient relief for families with children. Some people suggest that the deduction for dependent children be increased and family allowances abolished. Presumably the government's thinking in this area is that direct subsidies are essential for lower-income people since these people derive relatively little benefit from tax deductions.

The logic of allowing a much smaller deduction for children under 16 than for children over 16 is questionable. Although expenses may be greater for children over 16, families with younger children are generally much less solvent and require more assistance.

In the field of education, although no payments are made to families for the purpose of educating children to the secondary level, the fact that education to this level is free represents the most substantial economic commitment by the state in the area of child rearing. The significance of this contribution is very apparent to parents who opt to send their children outside the public system. Where the parents choose this option, no government assistance is provided, at least in Ontario. In one other Canadian province, parents who send their children to private schools are entitled to have their property tax dollars directed to the private school in question rather than to the public school system.

In the case of post-secondary education, costs are heavily subsidized by government and, in addition, direct subsidies may be payable to the students to defray their living expenses. Our income tax law recognizes that children today are dependent on their parents for a longer period of time by allowing a deduction for dependent children over 18 where they are in full-time attendance at an educational institution. In health, free universal medical care provides larger benefits to families with children. The state has not as yet moved to provide free dental care for children.

My premise is that declining birth rates will force governments to provide incentives to people to have children. Government assistance to date to families with children has taken three forms: direct subsidies, tax relief and

the provision of services. My guess is that assistance in the future will take all three of these forms with emphasis varying depending on political and economic realities.

It is to be hoped that the problem will be recognized early and attacked in a coherent fashion rather than piecemeal as so often occurs. Unfortunately, bold political initiatives are unlikely because the area is a difficult one for politicians, complicated as it is by involved social issues.

**Prof. Anne Callagan:** All three levels of government are involved in a far-reaching melange of measures assisting or complementing individual and family functioning. Together these measures are designed to relieve distress (as in income supplements), provide security (as in mothers allowances and pensions and supplementary benefits), equalize opportunities (as in grants and loans for advanced education, special programs for the retarded) and protect individuals and families against the crippling burdens of illness (with medi-care, hospitalization and nursing home schemes). They also aim to generally encourage healthy family life (as with family allowances, family planning education programs, assistance with day care and counselling for indebted families). These are all examples of ways in which governments directly or through assistance to other organizations have attempted to support individual and family welfare.



Prof. Anne Callagan

In case we view the exchange of responsibilities between government assisted organizations and families as uni-directional, however, we should also take into account the fact that in recent years the movement to encourage the "normalization" of living for various categories of handicapped individuals, especially the retarded and severely psychiatrically ill, has placed new responsibilities on many families. Fotheringham, Skelton and Hoddinott's pioneering Ontario study comparing the functioning of families with retarded children, in which half the sample had the child institutionalized, while the others kept the child at

home, underlines this point. It was shown that a substantial number of the families retaining their children revealed a significant decrease in functioning over a year. The same trend was not apparent in the other group, and an overwhelming number of the parents whose children were institutionalized



reported improvement in their family functioning levels. Similar results were found in the well known longitudinal Chichester/Salisbury study in England. This study examined the burden on families caring for mental patients in a program where domiciliary care, with minimal hospitalization, was emphasized – compared with the burden on families with relatives treated in a traditional mental hospital.

The researchers concluded that in many instances home care left the family with more problems than mental hospital care did, and the additional burden on the home care families showed up increasingly strongly as time went by. It should be emphasized that neither of the two studies were criticizing the concept of community and family care of handicapped individuals. Rather their emphasis was on highlighting the burden on some families with handicapped members, so that this might lead to a realistic assessment of the need for community support services if such families were to avoid deterioration in their functioning.

**Prof. Ben Schlesinger:** It's interesting that every time we do a study on who "misuses" unemployment insurance and welfare we find a very small per cent of human beings are misusing these programs. Most families are benefitted. And now to say that you can do without them is a myth. No government would ever dare to take off these family supports because they have strengthened our families and have not really interfered in their life. I think one has to be very careful. To say, "Well, now, the family can be independent. Do your own thing. You're being spoiled by unemployment insurance. You're being spoiled by family allowance. You're being spoiled by government support." I think that's just a bunch of baloney.

**Dr. Ivan Illich:** Let me identify three dangers which I see very clearly. People who want courageously to challenge the take-over by the state of production, particularly of service production, formerly perceived as having been performed in the family, generally promote three kinds of policies.

The first is to perceive the family as a unit of consumer protection. PTA is an example. And if the parents have a say in how the school will be run, it strengthens the belief of parents that the school somehow now, symbolically under their control, will provide their children with the education they desire.

The second type of policy which we should unmask and carefully discuss is a danger which will distract, I think, from the goals which you pursue. It is

that of perceiving the family as a unit for integrated care. Our service agencies and professions have so enormously proliferated and have produced so many "goodies" that the time of people to administer these "goodies" has run out. Therefore, the new trend is to move from individual professional services lined up like beads into multi-professional services into a place where one can capture people to provide them with integrated service production. I heard people speaking about a family ministry. This is exactly what I'm afraid a family ministry would try to do.

The third type of policy frequently recommended in the attempt to strengthen the family is that of transforming parents and even all family members into certified para-professionals. An example I saw in the United States illustrates this. In five states women's groups agitated to get legislative endorsement for their attempts to bring birth back into the family. In four of these proposals it is suggested that women, indeed, should again have children in the home but only if they first pass an examination of being competent in birthing. In one particular state I saw a proposal by a so-called radical women's group that this certificate that says this woman is capable of giving birth should not be released by gynecologists, thank God, but by a women's movement. This is what I mean by para-professionalization of the family, and its integration into a controlled production system.

# What Can Be Done?

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*The suggestions were many and varied, ranging from philosophical approaches to calls for funding for specific programs.*

*Family life education, home support as an alternative to institutional care and the encouragement of foster grandparent programs were raised by several speakers.*

*There was also a suggestion that churches can play a greater role in strengthening the family and that governments might borrow an idea for a program developed by a church.*

## Beware of Over-Protection

**Dr. Michael Novak:** Beware of the state. Be very careful when the state assumes the role of any of the mediating institutions that it does not do more harm than good. There exists what I call the principle of overprotection. That is to say that if the government begins to assume the role of a subsidiary agency it often ends up not helping that agency, but suffocating it.

## Defend Liberties

**Dr. Ivan Illich:** I would like to recommend the necessity of insisting on the distinction between liberties and rights. When I claim a right, I conceive of

myself as a player in a zero-sum game where if one gains, others lose. When I speak about liberty, I claim to be left alone to do something, to generate use-values which I measure and which nobody else evaluates. I claim this liberty with a scope limited only by the non-interference in other people's liberties. Historically this distinction was applied to liberties and rights in the so-called civil rights arena.

As a theme for further discussion, why not consider the role of the state as protector of productive and useful liberties? This would imply a limitation of the function of state or corporation when the production of rights would begin to undermine or decrease the scope of liberty.

## **Encourage Self-Help**

**Prof. Anne Callagan:** Competent care either in institutions, or the home is expensive to provide – and neither individual families nor governments can be expected to shoulder the whole cost. There are no easy solutions, but clearly we should take every step to help individuals and families care for themselves to maintain independence as long as possible – whether through education, the discouragement of practices increasing risks of chronic ill health, more adequate provision of family support services (like holiday relief for families with sick members) and the elaboration of voluntary and co-operative help systems. In this way, hopefully, we can build on the concern of families which still exists for their members and adapt to the needs of our changing society.

## **Alternatives to Institutions**

**Prof. Ben Schlesinger:** What about single mothers who keep the child? What about alternate child-care services to day care? I'm not a proponent of day care for under 3-year-olds. There must be imaginative ways that we can have



child care services in this country that don't require \$3,000 per annum, that do not require building more institutions. These are areas in which government and private groups can get together to develop some imaginative experimental programs where children can be looked after properly. What about groups of families for mutual support? I have heard, for example, of a neighbourhood where 10 families get together not like block parents – but a kind of mutual aid society where they bring back some of the neighbourhood ideas. I think the time is ripe for this.

**Margaret Weiers:** It is entirely possible that a government prepared to invest in family life, instead of just talking about it, would make economic gains in the long run. Public financial support of social agencies working with families, of day care for children of working parents, of homemaker and nursing services so that elderly grandparents and handicapped children can stay in their own homes, helps families and saves having to spend money on foster homes, welfare and various expensive institutions.

## **Family Life Education**

**Margaret Weiers:** How about better family life education in our public schools. Education that doesn't just give our youngsters the so-called facts of life about sex and contraception but lets them learn about the development of young children and the commitments involved in marriage. One way of doing this would be to have day nurseries in the high schools so adolescents, as part of their family life education courses, could learn to care for young children and, at the same time, provide day care for the working parents in the neighbourhood. Family life is important, but it isn't enough just to say so. We must put our money where our mouths are.

**Prof. Ben Schlesinger:** We're a bunch of hypocrites in this country. We talk about the necessity for family life education and we do very little. We have more reports about all kinds of things and we do less than any other industrialized English-speaking country. It's time that we implement. We talk about prevention. Prevention doesn't start when the person comes and says, "I want to get a divorce." It starts in kindergarten. Catholic school boards

have introduced very positive family education programs. The other boards don't do it. They talk about it.

**Kirsti Jarvis**, The Ontario Federation of Home and School: We have had a program operating in the last few years called Discovery Groups. Our aim has been to try to get groups of pre-school parents together to talk about raising children, understand the difficulties of family life and realize that no one is alone in the problems they have. I wonder if there isn't some way that pregnant women when they first make the contact with the doctor couldn't be directed to some similar group that could look into the problems of child-raising and of family life so that perhaps some of these difficulties could be prevented early? There are various groups, not only in the home and school, but other agencies available that try to promote parent education programs.

Several points have been made about the need for a family life course – not just the mechanics of reproduction for our schools. I understand that some programs are much further along that line than others. These are the kinds of things we can work with in our education system, in our homes and in the other organizations that we represent here. But perhaps there is something that can be done through a medical association or the hospitals to try to set up these initial contacts into family rearing.

## **Change Work Patterns**

**Dr. Michael Novak**: It is important to conceive of new ways in which work might be spread. Isn't it within our reach to imagine job cycles of five or six hours a day which both men and women would find quite attractive? It seems to me it's not beyond the boundary of government or industry to imagine new ways of sharing the work, new ways of developing alternative modules of work that would do much for family.

**Margaret Weiers**: Given the fact that so many parents are in the labour force, how about some changes in the labour laws so that the parents can take time off to be with a sick child and so that part-time work for both men and women carries with it the same fringe benefits that full time employment does?

## Incentives to Raise Children

**Wayne Beach:** In the event that it does become necessary in the future for the state to provide additional incentives to families to raise children, it can choose among a variety of tools available.

In the area of direct subsidies, the proposal that housewives be paid a salary has generally been dismissed out of hand. In economic terms, this would simply represent an extension of the present family allowance payments. However, philosophically, it would require that new ground be broken.

The problem with subsidies is, firstly, the direct financial outlay involved and, secondly, the indirect cost involved in administering them. Because of the administrative problems, all beneficiaries tend to be paid the same amount which introduces inequities.

The second avenue available is the provision of services. The Ontario government now is moving into the areas of subsidized housing and subsidized day care. The question which arises in this area is whether the government should provide the services directly or pay the private sector to provide them. In the area of education, the government provides the services directly, whereas in the health area, we find a combination of the two approaches with hospitals being run directly by government and the medical profession being paid to provide their services. The prevailing political sentiment now appears to be that governments should pull in their horns which would lead one to believe that, in the near future, governments will tend not to provide new services and, where they do, they will engage the private sector to provide the service.

Clearly, the simplest and least expensive way to provide government assistance is through tax relief. For example, exemption claims for dependent children could be increased without the necessity of hiring a single civil servant. Could we say the same of salaries for mothers? However, this form of assistance has two drawbacks. Firstly, lower-income families derive a proportionately smaller benefit and, secondly, the assistance in many cases comes but once a year in the form of a tax refund. The second problem would not arise where the tax relief took the form of an increased deduction which was taken into account when tax was withheld at the payroll stage.

Both problems would be resolved if a negative income tax were introduced involving periodic payments.

## **Help by the Elderly**

**Dr. Michael Novak:** I would wish there were tax credits available so that elderly folks in the neighbourhood would be encouraged to provide day care to people on their block. There was a short time ago on the books in the United States legislation that anybody could receive money for providing day care, except to their own relatives. That is insane. Most people would want their own relatives watching over their own children – an aunt or an uncle who is a little bit retarded and can't hold a job but is terrific with the kids; a grandparent, whatever. Now you can, by a very recent change in the law, deduct child-care expenses paid to a relative. I think that's a step forward. I think it would be another step forward if it were organized around a parish, or the high school or if grandparents were reimbursed, perhaps by tax credits or by a direct subsidy. I also think it is very good when there are institutions which bring together the grandparent generation and the younger generation – orphanages and old age homes. It just seems to me such a natural. This can be done in many hospital circumstances so that these generations can invigorate each other with those opposite qualities they possess. The very young and the very old and nourishing one another. That would make very good sense.

**Prof. Ben Schlesinger:** What are some family services that might be imaginative? Well, one is foster grandparenthood. We now have eight per cent of our population over age 65. In 1980, 10 percent of Canadians will be over 65. At the moment 1.8 million Canadians are over 65, among them healthy women and men who have something to offer and we miss using them in this whole area of the family. Some imaginative programs are starting, one in British Columbia, using that tool around the family. I'm now involved in study of grandparents in this city with 17 of my students and it's fascinating what we are finding that grandparents are doing and can do.

**John Osborne,** Department of National Health and Welfare: Two speakers talked about the foster grandparent program and the thought occurred to me



that more effort might be made to use our New Horizons program to stimulate foster grandparent activities. This, as you probably all know, is a program whereby grants are made to groups of elderly citizens to engage in worthwhile activities. We hoped when we set up the New Horizons program that one of these worthwhile activities would be a foster grandparent program.

**Sister St. Michael Guinan**, Consultant on Gerontology for the Senior Citizens Bureau of Ontario and Director of the Canadian Institute of Religion and Gerontology: I was very happy to hear Dr. Schelsinger speak about the resources of the elderly. I'm sure Dr. Schlesinger has heard about the little experiment by the volunteers in public service where volunteer grandparents (are helping) the immigrant child adjust to the cultural clash, plus the talent bank that the senior alumnae of the University of Toronto are now trying to set up to utilize this neglected source.

## **Reform Law**

**Margaret Weiers**: The government continues to drag its feet on reforming family property law. We've had two bills die on the order paper. The reforms (would ensure) that spouses whose marriages fail have equal share in the property they've accumulated during marriage. Such legislation would do away with acrimonious court fights over property and would thus help maintain cordial relationships between parents and children even after a separation or a divorce.

## **Divorce Counselling**

**Prof. Ben Schlesinger**: In the whole area of post-family breakup counselling, we always stop working with families after they have broken up. After the lawyer says it's finished, then nobody picks up the pieces emotionally or psychologically.

## Action by the Church

**Bruce Smith**, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: It's on the mediating institution that I'd like to centre for a moment. I think the church is one of the most effective mediating institutions that can move into this realm and I'm not sure that we've done all that we can do. The single parent family, the traditional family, all can interact in the larger influence of adults, I think best, within the spirit of the church. The surrogate parent concept is possible there. The intermingling of adults and younger people and the expansion of the family from the nuclear family to the extended family can be replaced, I think, very effectively by the church. My submission is that we churchmen could do a great deal in strengthening the family and ought to turn our thoughts to that direction.

## Family Nights

**Russell Ballard**: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: I would like to make a suggestion that perhaps the provincial government would give some consideration to calling together some church leaders and others to prepare a simple manual that could be made available to families. Families then could use it as a guideline to calling their children together for a family home evening on a minimum, once-a-week basis. Certainly, on the part of our church, I know I'd be delighted to volunteer everything we've learned.

We've prepared, church-wide, a family home evening manual. We've printed 2.5 million of them and sent them world-wide for families to work with. I think that's a positive solution to how you overcome the problem of the impact of television.

And, finally, being a father of seven children and, up to this point, with fingers crossed, meeting with some degree of success, the key to me seems to be communication. I really don't believe there's any generation gap. I think that's a myth. I think there's a generation gap because we have allowed ourselves to think there is. The reason, if there is a generation gap, is because

we don't talk to each other and the reason we don't talk to each other is because we don't set any time to specifically do that.

So our recommendation would be pick a night that's your night with the kids and just have it with them. Sometimes we just plain have fun. We go to Ontario Place or play games or whatever the children want to do, but that would be a suggestion that might be worthwhile for you to consider.

## **Fund Family Services**

**Hazel McCallion**, Counsellor from the city of Mississauga: I'm wondering, since we're thinking about the family, if we could ask the province to also think about the funding of the programs to prevent the family from breaking up. There's been a concerted effort made by the family services of this province to try to get funding. I think if we really care about the family that we should do something about it. I was one of the founding members of the Peel Family Services and I feel very strongly that we all speak about the family unit, but, we don't do too much about it. The only two levels of government that can really fund this program are the federal government and the provincial government. I would like to know when they are going to act? We have acted at the local level. I think it's now up to them.

## **Return Responsibilities**

**Greg McClare**, The Toronto Board of Education, Chief Social Worker: I think we're now at the point where social agencies, both private and public have to take a look at themselves and evaluate their role. I think there's a new need for accountability both to the family and to the community. We naturally assume that we're doing something very positively for families. Very often I wonder if we're not contributing more to their illnesses.

One other thing I think we haven't mentioned and that is strategies that I

think we're going to have to develop in terms of returning, repatriating some of the responsibilities to families. I think school systems have a great role to play in that. Another session should be devoted to strategies to repatriate some of those responsibilities. I don't think we know how to do that yet.

## **Review Legislation**

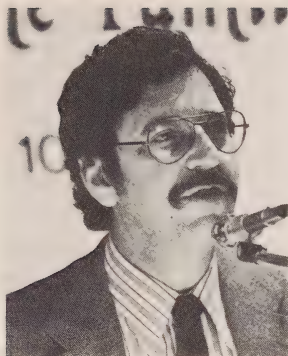
**Gertrude Wiltshire**, Provincial Council of Women for Ontario: I have once again been, this year, very disappointed in the Ontario section of the income tax returns. I feel that this section could be used much more imaginatively, firstly to collect a fantastic amount of information about people, which Ontario might like to have in its own information bank rather than having to get it from the federal government. Secondly, that form could be used to give many of the benefits which have been mentioned here today. In addition, the Provincial Council of Women . . . is urging the government of Ontario to require that legislation and policy of any ministry affecting family and marriage be drafted and stated in terms which recognize that marriage and family life are a concern of the state as well as of the participating individuals. What we're saying here today is that the government should assess all its policies in the light of what are they doing to the family.

**Dr. Michael Novak**: The new political philosophy that I'm arguing for has one basic principle which may be stated this way: Does any social policy ask, "Is it good for the family. What does it do to the family?" That's not a question often asked.

## **Chairmen's Remarks**

**Edward Ryan**: There you have it, the polarization on issues. Less than full approval of the government. Such things as a call for access to the economic benefits of the marketplace based on merit, not sex – something on which I've had something to say in other places. The concept of divorce as a constructive alternative. Tough words and certainly not minced.

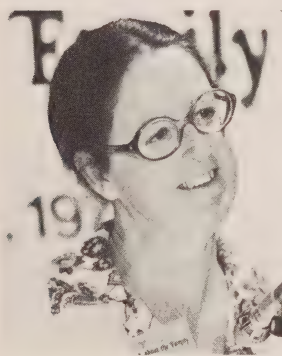




Edward Ryan

I think that it's apparent that being a critic in Canada, given the fact that as Prof. Schlesinger points out that we often do less than any other industrialized nation in the world, except talk, is often like harpooning a beached whale. I think we all recognize that we have a long way to go and I think that we should now turn our minds to the question of how we get there.

try to strengthen them. Where people have, in fact, opted out of the system as it has traditionally existed, should the helping institutions then reach out to them or should they try to push them back into the old mold? It's a question which, of course, has no answer but it should concern us all.



Dr. Moira Sansom

**Dr. Moira Sansom:** I have picked out some of the things it seems to me we've been saying to one another. We've had a lot of "beware's", a lot of warnings.

Beware nostalgia, that yet to go back . . . wipe out what's going on, we've been told again and again, look out, you can't do that and anyway you wouldn't like it if you did it. That's come across very clearly.

Beware of the state, the government, managing family. We've been told that in many ways. We are becoming worried about the way in which we've tried to manage our economy. I'm beginning to wonder if we're doing that very well. Do we want to take on managing another aspect of our life – the family, which is, I suspect infinitely more complex? And we don't really know what we're doing. A number of people have pointed out that some of our moves have been at least ambivalent pointing in two directions, partly to help, partly to hinder and some downright bewildering as to what they are about.

Dr. Illich has said, "beware thinking of the family as yet another economic

producer. Beware thinking of it as a consumer of commodities” – a lot of bewares. Beware of our own impotence. Beware feeling that it has to be done for us, that we cannot do it ourselves and I think the audience more than the panelists have repeatedly said, “look there are things that we can do, are doing, have done and it works.” I think we need to remember that.

There are other things that we would be advised to remember. The family is important. Dr. Novak has had a number of swipes taken at him. I thought he took a very brave position – a vulnerable position. It is very nice to hear somebody speak with such concern as he did, about the things that are so important to us but don’t seem to have official status.

We’ve been asked to remember that women have had a unique role. They have been, as Anne Callagan pointed out, the group historically most concerned with maintaining the kinship system in our society. A group concerned with nurturing. We need to remember that. It’s interesting that in Ivan Illich’s examples of the disastrous turning of things which should have use-value into commodities – they were all feminine domestic things. Breast feeding, for instance. No matter what your liberation views are, that’s feminine! They had to do with domesticity which we’ve down-graded over the years. We’ve done a disservice there.

We’ve done another disservice. We have glorified and idealized the romance of big business – being out there outside the home doing things. I think both are quite unreal. I’ve experienced both worlds so perhaps I can speak with some fairness. We’ve done this, I think, partly because the office is easier. Right? The office is easier. We need to remember that people can do things, that there are volunteers who can do things, that there are people who are not impotent.

I think it’s Dr. Illich who pointed out, we’ve been caught on the idea that things need to be standardized to be right. If the apples have spots on them, they’re not right. They must look like a plastic apple, and so on. There are endless examples.

I noticed one theme that kept on recurring in many ways . . . the wish that somebody, somewhere, could fix it for us, could do the things we need to have done in order to be comfortable again. I’ve watched with pleasure Mrs. Birch saying, “Uh, uh, I’m not going to be that kind of mommy. I can’t

promise to make it better. I can't promise to do things for you which will fix it." She has said that in general and she said that in particular when obviously it was very awkward to say it. I think it's a childhood kind of fantasy. There once was a time when grownups could fix it and it was great. We're very reluctant, all of us, to give that up. I think that we've tried to tell ourselves through the day that we must give it up and we're trying to do this.

Many of you probably know the work of an industrial psychologist, (Frederick) Herzberg, who said some very sensible things about the psychology of industry. They apply in a vast number of places. He pointed out that there are factors which, if absent, makes for dissatisfaction, aspects of the job which are unpleasant. When these are fixed, when something is done about them, when nice washrooms are put in and air conditioning and so on, they relieve dissatisfaction. That's all they do. They don't make the job great. They don't make you want to work any harder. The factors that are creative – he calls them motivators – the factors that stimulate, the factors that make people potent rather than impotent in their work, these are another group of factors altogether. He's not as clear about those – they never are.

Now, it seems to me that there's an analogy here for what we are trying to say about what we're doing for the family. There are obviously all sorts of moves which we can make which are akin to Herzberg's factors; hygiene factors he calls them, which simply will relieve dissatisfaction or create dissatisfaction. It's very easy to be destructive. We can do things which will make the family weaker, which will make ourselves less potent and we've had a lot of those mentioned. Correcting those will not necessarily, by any means, create the kind of family life we'd like to have and I think we must keep that in mind.

Two things have been mentioned which would help facilitate the opportunity for us individually to do more with our family life. One big factor, obviously, is time. This has been said directly by a member of the audience. You've got to put in time with your family. If your business life is so arranged that this can't be done, then this will be destructive to family life. However, giving you the time, doesn't mean you are going to use it creatively in promoting your family or yourself. You may well spend all afternoon watching T.V. which won't do a thing. Another aspect that was mentioned was the giving of information in all the various ways we give information. Again, the fact that you have information doesn't mean that you use it wisely. The use of your

time, the use of information, this is very much a personal thing – this is up to us.

What should we do immediately as a result of what we have heard today? Those of us who are in a position as administrators, who say something about what other people do, I think we should examine our own policies in our own doorways, so to speak, as to how what we ask others to do affects their time. Do they have time for themselves, whether they use it or not? Or are we asking for a sort of 18-hour commitment? I think each of us needs to think about that.

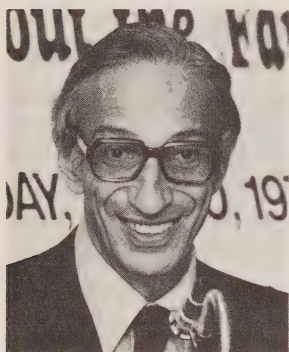
Again, I come back to a point that you have made as an audience again and again. It's been a pleasure to hear, "We are able to do things. We don't have to wait until somebody says, 'Do them this way, or give us the funds to do them.' We can do things."



# Appendix

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## Address by Dr. Ivan Illich\*



Dr. Ivan Illich

*Writer and lecturer, he is author of several books, including *Deschooling Society*, *Tools for Conviviality*, *Energy and Equity* and *Medical Nemesis*. Trained as a scholar and priest, Dr. Illich worked in New York, where he learned to speak Spanish. He went to Puerto Rico in 1956 and served as Vice-Rector of the University. He went to Cuernavaca in Mexico and was involved in the founding of CIDOC, an institution that helped prepare people to work in Latin America and to deal with problems of development.*

Fifty years ago, nine out of every 10 words spoken in America were personally addressed by one person to another. Words were mostly tools for conversation. Conviviality still prevailed over broadcasts. Speeches, sermons, lessons, orders and shows did not hog the language as they do today. Loudspeakers and talkies had not yet raised the ruckus, had not yet monopolized speech. Today, the proportion has been precisely reversed. Nine out of every 10 words an American child hears are not addressed to him or to the neighbour whom he overhears, but to a group where they use mostly building blocks for messages. They are picked and placed by experts and not by the speaker who recites them. Words are packages for ideas and images, or feelings and opinions of those who have privileged access to the media. In other terms, jargons pollute language. The word has ceased to be essentially a tool for the expression of a personality and is a commodity to manage.

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In only a few decades, the world has become an amalgam. Human responses to everyday occurrences have been standardized everywhere. The world has been standardized. The human family today has become the task of ministries and UNESCOs. The light switch next to the door has replaced the dozens of ways in which fires, candles and lanterns were formerly kindled. In 10 years the number of switch-users has tripled. In a few years, flush and paper have become essential conditions for the relief of ever more bowels. Twenty years ago, UNESCO in its large meeting in Santiago defined as the major obstacle to development in Latin America, the unwillingness of parents to send their children to schools. Only seven years later, the same UNESCO commission said that there was an eleven-times more demand for places in the classroom than classroom space available. But even faster than the demand for education and the demand for the necessity of toilet paper and flush, social imagination has withered. Light that does not flow from high voltage or hygiene without tissue paper seems to be a step back rather than a step forward. Propagation of the family without educational input – how much of it do you have? Let me measure it – think a step back – and it does not only mean a return to the jungle for most people, it means poverty. The standardization of expectations in response grow, while autonomous action and hopeful trust decline.

Development, or modernization has had the same effect in all societies. Everywhere, so-called progress has enmeshed people in a new web of dependence on commodities. Everywhere, these have come to replace what people had done – although differently in each culture – to cope outside the market. And everywhere this substitution of use-values by commodities has extinguished the ability, the will and most often, most conditions for a reversal of this trend. As the volume and number of commodities increased, the different cultures have become insipid, look-alike residues, each formerly marked by a different traditional style of action, each now a washed-up dreg in one vast world-wide wasteland – an arid terrain devastated by the machines and the systems needed to produce and consume. And what I say about culture in general, I can say very specifically about what we place in the category of family and family life.

On the banks of the Seine and those of the Niger, people have unlearned to milk and nurse because of the white stuff that now can be purchased at the grocer. Thanks to better consumer protection, this product is less poisonous in France than it is in Mali, or in Haute Volta. True, more babies now get cow's milk, but the breasts of both rich and poor have dried up. What

happened is clear: the commodity called "formula" has replaced the autonomous action of giving the breast. The substitution of use-values by commodities, from a certain point on, makes use-value generation impossible because the infrastructure for commodity production has taken out of the environment the conditions which are necessary for use-value generation. The bottle-fed babies of the world are much more unequally fed (depending on the social status of their mothers) than their breast-fed ancestors who also were unequally fed because of some of their mothers had no nourishment. But on top of it, in the new inequality both rich and poor have been profoundly deprived of many immunity factors. The new institutional arrangement has sapped the skills, the traditions, the habits and perhaps the organic equipment that were required to sustain on a humane level a major aspect of life.

Take another example. All over Latin America, roofs of shingle or thatch, of tile or of slate have been displaced by concrete for the few and always the same corrugated plastic for the many. Not only the competence to make the old roofs has disappeared, but even the language to speak about them has died out. Late industrial society has organized life dogmatically around commodities and this has transformed the family from the basic cell for use-value generation, for things people do and make without any eye on how or where to exchange it, into the basic unit for consumption. I can warn there are very many pitfalls through which a meeting like this, with all good intentions, can be used to make the family into a more effective consumer of standardized education, health care, etc. than you ever could do with government supervision. In the progressive substitution, of use-values by commodities, ever larger pieces of our lives have been so transformed that life itself has become to depend almost exclusively on commodities sold on the world market. The fact that these commodities, such as school years, passenger miles, hysterectomies or baby formula are allocated here by the wisdom of pricing and there by the wisdom of planners does not change their nature as commodities. Political opposition between proponents of alternate methods of allocation only masks the similarly ruthless disregard of use-values common to all factions and parties that promote commodities instead.

Again an example. On the day the government in Mexico published the new building code, most people in our country lost their homes. The code conceives of housing as a commodity that meets certain minimum measures. Most families found that their home-made shacks were degraded by the code and legally now defined as hovels. They did not meet the measure of some need-

making professional who defines what people shall consume, when and how and for what reason. People were deprived of the protection against the bulldozer that colonial law grants to the residence of every Spanish squatter. Furthermore, and this is really the rub, self-building was now prejudiced. No house could be legally started without the submission of an approved architect's plan. The code was unable to reflect the fact that mud-brick houses which are prevalent in Mexico, take shape as they are built, at the fancy of the builder. They are use-values. They are not commodities, and lack the characteristics of the commodity. The man who produces his own dwelling is now looked down upon as a deviant. He not only upsets the planner, he refuses to co-operate with the local pressure group organized for the delivery of more low-income housing by the government. Housing turns from an activity into a commodity, and castrates the traditional subsistence crafts of the poor. Now you can say the same thing about cooking, about food producing, about salad growing, about food preservation, whatever you want in the family, down to bringing children into this world. The useful unemployment of the jobless poor is sacrificed to the expansion of the labour market and of employment.

I have heard recommendations to go the Chinese way, or the Nazi way, to say that since we can't pay for all employment, we'll draft volunteers into employment to do what professionals tell them so that we can evaluate if they do it well and then give them income tax deductions on what they contribute. I want to make it very clear, I am not concerned if the job is paid or unpaid, that's for the finance minister to discuss. I'm concerned about the fact that the job produces measurable outputs. To make one's own house, to grow one's own food or to bicycle to work, become, in such a society, the privileges of some deviants – more often than not, of the idle rich. That is, useful unemployment is more socially biased in favour of the rich than income. And this seems to me the main issue for discussion, before we dream about the possibility of families surviving in a commodity-intensive society.

This addiction to paralyzing affluence, once it becomes encrusted in a culture, generates, for a lack of another name, what I would call "modernized poverty." And the family in such a society becomes the fundamental sink into which modernized poverty sediments. I propose this term of "modernized poverty" to designate a form of disvalue that is necessarily associated with the escalation and proliferation of industrial commodities. The specific disutility of industrial production, that is of commodity prevalence, has escaped the attention of economists because it consists of the loss of use-values that



economic measurements generally disregard. Modernization of poverty is not another negative externality, like the disvalue of pollution. It is not an externality like the disvalue of social polarization that results from higher fares introduced to protect the environment. These externalities can be measured by economists. The loss of the potential to create satisfactions that have no market equivalent cannot be measured as such. In Los Angeles, where the landscape is shaped to fit motorized wheels, feet lose much of their value in use. The environment is distorted, is rebuilt, for vehicles. Just as the environment – the social environment for young people – is slanted in favour of education, it's slanted against learning which will not be satisfied. The paralysis of feet constitutes a negative internality that results from the volume of passenger miles, just as the paralysis of learning opportunities within the basic network which we call "family" results from an over-production with a negative internality of uneducated society.

The modernization of poverty has been, for a long time now a keen experience, but mostly for the poor – those who traditionally had been able to survive in spite of their exclusion from the market economy – that was the definition of the poor when we were born not that long ago. Industrialization compelled the poor to systematically buy into a system, which for them, means getting always the dregs of the market in which all are now compelled to buy. The Indians I have seen in Oaxaca, who formerly had no access to schools, are now drafted into "education". They earn certificates which measure precisely their inferiority relative to the urban population. The Blacks in the United States, subject to affirmative discrimination went through the same experience. Furthermore, both Indians and Blacks – and this is again the rub – without the new piece of paper can no longer get a job. The modernization of professionally-defined needs compounds, for both the Indian and the Black underprivilege with a new kind of discrimination.

But now modernized poverty, especially in affluent countries, has become the experience of all, except those few who are so rich that they can drop out in luxury. Every year several new facets of life are made to depend on new kinds of engineered supplies. Few can escape the continually recurrent experience of new forms of impotence for which we are diagnosed and pay. In a society where people cannot make, but must always buy what they need, need itself changes its character. When people need what they still can make, needs are shaped by the remembrance of past satisfaction obtained from personal action – by doing something. When people need what they cannot make, and this is our situation, and their needs are determined by the ever-

changing expert prescription of what is good for them, needs are shaped by salesmen rather than by recourse to memory. Increasingly, people are forced to appease their needs even though they don't get from it any memorable satisfaction.

As a result of the multiplication of such imputed needs, in a society which proceeds with a professionalism which can define for other people what they ought to have, even well-heeled shoppers acquire, with each new commodity, a fresh experience of disutility. They suspect they've purchased something of doubtful value, perhaps soon to become useless or even dangerous – and something which most probably calls for an array of even more expensive complements. A high school degree calls for much more expensive college. And that happens in most other commodities, too. But what is worse, people now sense that they have introduced, with every purchase, a new need for commodities into their personal lives and thereby have lost the ability to fend quite happily for themselves. And when I speak about commodities, I speak about goods and services alike. The new addiction has modernized another facet of their poverty. And if we continue to speak about the family as the basic agency for education, we only decentralize need-making by engaging parents as para-professional educators.

As a consequence of this progressive substitution of commodities for autonomous competence, both needs and wants have acquired a character for which there is no historical precedent. For the first time, needs have become almost exclusively coterminous with commodities. Society has turned into a conditioning system that trains people to need what the market offers and not to want what cannot be bought. And the family is increasingly conceived, even by those who speak about its strengthening, as a basic unit in which retraining takes place. The freedom to walk becomes irrelevant in a society that strains in the effort to produce transportation for everyone. People have lost use of their auto-mobility and can no longer imagine liberation from universal passengerhood. The liberty of modern man to move in the modern world is practically gone. And so is the place where each man can stand in the centre of his own world – the place which is psychologically that which traditionally we call the place of the family.

From conception to coma, people are drafted. A woman told me upon the birth of her third child by which time she felt both competent and experienced in how to bring life into the world, what happened to her. She was in a

hospital and sensed the child coming. She called the nurse who, instead of assisting her, rushed for a sterile towel to press the baby's head back into her womb. The nurse ordered her to "stop pushing" because her doctor was not yet in sight. How could we have gotten to this dominance of heteronomous production over autonomous action?

To guarantee quality and equality by means of professional control, we have come to insist that most needs ought to be met by people hired to do a job. Work in this kind of society does not any more mean toil or commitment to do something but it means employment which is a social relationship. It is quite clear that a woman that "only brings up her children", who "only runs the house" does not work. While a woman who does God knows what socially useless activities as a social worker, for instance, will be considered a worker contributing to the GNP. The idea of an equitable distribution of the time and power to be useful to self and to others outside of employment or volunteer draft has been effectively repressed even in our social imagination. Work done off the job is looked down upon, or even ignored. It doesn't produce commodity and therefore produces only those use-values which economists will tell you are an antiquated concept of medieval economics. Autonomous activity threatens the employment level, generates deviance and detracts from the GNP. Therefore, it is not valued and therefore it is only improperly called "work".

My assumption is that an alternate form of modernity is possible. It is not necessary that technical progress be mainly placed at the service of increasing commodity outputs be they goods or services. The technical developments of the last 100 years can be equally well placed in the hands of people to produce use-values in what is called the domestic mode of production. To conclude, let me identify three dangers which I see very clearly. People who want courageously to challenge the take-over by the state of production, particularly of service production, formerly perceived as having been performed in the family, generally promote three kinds of policies.

The first is to perceive the family as a unit of consumer protection. PTA is an example. And if the parents have a say in how the school will be run it strengthens the belief of parents that the school somehow now, symbolically under their control, will provide their children with the education they desire.

The second type of policy which we should unmask and carefully discuss is a danger which will distract, I think, from the goals which you pursue. It is that of perceiving the family as a unit for integrated care. Our service agencies

and professions have so enormously proliferated and have produced so many “goodies” that the time of people to administer these “goodies” has run out. Therefore, the new trend is to move from individual professional services lined up like beads into multi-professional services into a place where one can capture people to provide them with integrated service production. I heard people speaking about a family ministry. This is exactly what I’m afraid a family ministry would try to do.

The third type of policy frequently recommended in the attempt to strengthen the family is that of transforming parents and even all family members into certified para-professionals. An example I saw in the United States illustrates this. In five states women’s groups agitated to get legislative endorsement for their attempts to bring birth back into the family. In four of these proposals it is suggested that women, indeed, should again have children in the home but only if they first pass an examination of being competent in birthing. In one particular state I saw a proposal by a so-called radical women’s group that this certificate that says this woman is capable of giving birth should not be released by gynecologists, thank God, but by a women’s movement. This is what I mean by para-professionalization of the family, and its integration into a controlled production system.

I would like to close by recommending the necessity of insisting on the distinction between liberties and rights. When I claim a right, I conceive of myself as a player in a zero-sum game where if one gains, others lose. I conceive of myself as somebody who insists for me and our group on the right to more hospital beds, which means a burden on society at large. When I speak about liberty, I claim to be left alone to do something to generate use-values which I measure and which nobody else evaluates; I claim this liberty with a scope limited only by the non-interference in other people’s liberties. Usually we make such a distinction when we speak about, for instance, the right to be printed, and the liberty to say. Obviously, the two are related to each other – the liberty to say what I want to say does not imply so many inches in the daily newspaper. Historically, this distinction was applied to liberties and rights in the so-called civil rights arena. I suggest that the distinction apply in the area of production or generation of useful values. Let us speak about liberties to production as opposed to rights to employment or produce. As a theme for further discussion, why not consider the role of the state as protector of productive and useful liberties. This would imply a limitation of the function of state or corporation when the production of rights would begin to undermine or decrease the scope of liberty.



## Keynote address by Dr. Michael Novak\*



Dr. Michael Novak

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I'd like to begin by letting you know that I will be making three points. As a trinitarian should. I'll try to keep the remarks brief since we have all day and can pick up details of discussion at later moments.

The first set of remarks I'd like to make has to do with the background for raising the question of the family. It has to do really, with defining a philosophical background. But I'd like first to begin with two facts, if I may. The first one of great significance is that in the United States and, I believe closely paralleled, if not exceeded in Canada, 66 per cent of all husbands and wives do stay together until "death doth them part." Ted Williams once said that baseball is the only field in the world in which excellence consists in succeeding at .300 – or 30 per cent. And so, the figure 66 per cent is remarkable in itself, but more so in the sort of society in which we live. Nowadays, given the miracle of modern medicine, it takes so much longer for "death to doth part" people. It was one thing to pledge your troth until death when the average age of death was 38, 39, 40. It's totally different today when the average woman will live to 72 or 73 and the oppressive male until 67 or 68. It means that one is marrying someone, in effect, for two or three lifetimes – for youth and the having of children, the nurturing of children, and for a middle period of work, and for a quite significant period in which both partners are quite likely to be in a career quite different from the career they had in their middle years.

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The second figure I'd like to mention is that some 78 per cent of all divorced couples – again the figure is from the United States but I believe it is even exceeded by figures in Canada, remarry. That too is remarkable. There is absolutely no doubt about the survival of the family. The only question is with what health and with what moral power and in what direction it will continue. The fact that the family is as strong now as it ever was is not at all in dispute. One forgets how many couples were parted by death or by migrations or by war or by famine or by so many things like brutal economic necessity, 50 years ago, 75 years ago, 100 years ago. One forgets how many children grew up orphans. One forgets how many casualties there were, not even counted by statisticians. In other words, one forgets the hard times of the family of 100 years ago or more. Despite all the pessimism about the family today, the figures on the break-up of families are relatively constant over the years.

So these two figures, I think, help us explain a little of what we are talking about. But they also bring into light the fact that when we talk about the family we're at a grave disadvantage. For one thing, most of our language about the family and about everything else for that matter, comes through the eyes of the top 10 per cent of the population, in income, in education, in professional work. About 10 per cent of the population of the United States has four years of college, about 10 per cent make over \$22,000 a year. And about 10 per cent, a little more than that have professional jobs, that is, jobs where they're not paid by the hour, in which they more or less arrange their schedules as they will. Now, almost all of those in the media and in the universities, almost all the leaders of public discussions, almost all the opinion-makers, almost all the opinion-leaders, come from this class – the top 10 per cent. And it is precisely in this class that marriage is under peculiar strains. Special strains. And the rearing of children is exceedingly difficult, with absentee fathers, absent as much as fathers in the ghetto, actually, and many other strains. So our image of what is happening in the family often becomes influenced by what is happening in the family of those who give us the images. That's one source of distortion, not unimportant.

A second source is that neither in our liberal nor in our conservative tradition – I respect the fact that in the United States and in Canada, these terms have different history and different significance, but for the point at hand, I think the issue is the same – neither in our liberal nor in our conservative traditions is there a well worked out political philosophy of the family. We have been much better, especially in Anglo-American traditions but also in French and

in other traditions which compose our culture, in talking about the individual and in talking about the state. While about the family there is only a very small body of theory, indeed. It surely is the single most understudied institution among the major institutions in our midst. The church has been studied more, the labour unions have been studied more. Everybody takes the family for granted. Worse than that, both from a liberal and from a conservative point of view, in certain respects, the family has been something of – let me not say an enemy – but a force of opposition against which to define oneself. In liberal thought quite commonly, the family is looked upon as a source of prejudice, bias, habit and custom which ought to be “enlightened” – replaced by more enlightened attitudes, methods and procedures. And quite often reform movements are directed in effect against family upbringing and against the ties of family and neighbourhood, and the rest, in which children in the past have grown up. And quite commonly the liberal looks toward the federal government or the state for the source of more enlightenment and more progress.

On the other side, quite commonly, at least implicitly, while there has been a kind of praise of the family in the conservative tradition, the emphasis has fallen on the individual, even the rugged individual, the self-reliant individual. Here, too, the family has been looked upon, often, as a force rather inhibiting and holding back the individual. An institution from which the individual must break in order to exert his or her own independence. In both camps, I believe it is fair to say, both the intellectual tradition of speaking about the family, and a tradition of political philosophy which would suggest how we ought to think politically about the family are vastly underdeveloped.

I come more from a liberal direction to these matters. But it is also true that I do so with a certain respect for organic connections for contingency, for history, for the consequences which arise from the past. Which means that I think like a liberal but have a conservative temperament. I predict that in connection with the family we will see over the next decade, among liberals for certain, and among conservatives as well, a major turn towards the family and other mediating institutions. By the term “mediating institution” I mean to point to all those institutions which stand between the naked, solitary individual and the state: the state which everywhere, in socialist as well as liberal regimes, is growing stronger every day. More omnipotent, more omniscient, penetrating into every corner of our lives. Mediating institutions are institutions much neglected in our political theory. They are not mentioned, for example, in the Constitution of the United States. Family is not mentioned – the individual is, the state is.

So also with the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood policy is becoming very important in the United States yet we don't even know how to define the neighbourhood. The cultural group is now living under new and modern conditions, which are not tribal, and in which the cultural group can be maintained even across vast distances. For example, among the Syrian-Lebanese in the United States who live, perhaps in a concentrated way in only two or three cities sufficient to form a neighbourhood with a parish, but who are spread all across the United States, in numbers somewhere under a million. And yet they retain a very strong culture at a distance from one another, living as individuals. A very strong network of communication. A non-tribal form of life, but a powerful cultural life just the same. Distinct from that of other cultures.

It was only in 1935 that John Dewey in a little book called *Liberalism and Social Action* argued that for the first time in history, liberals ought not to regard the state as an enemy, ought not to look upon the state as a merely neutral force, but ought to look upon the state, particularly the federal government, as an instrument of moral purpose. A great spurt of social and political good could be achieved by liberal alliance with the central government and liberals ought not, despite tradition, to be afraid of government. Dewey argued therefore for a major turn in liberal history, and he defined four such previous turns in the past. We've now had 40 years of experience with that turn and, in my judgment, the cost of that turn has begun to catch up to us, and to surpass the great benefits it won. There's no doubt that great good was done by that turn, especially in the United States. Much has benefited the family, much good for people all across the country was done by that turn, but the cost has also become exceedingly high. Thus, I anticipate a major turn in liberal thought will occur, in the United States over the next 10 years. I'm quite confident that that direction will be to try to enlarge our understanding of, and our methods for enabling, those mediating institutions, without which strong individuals cannot be formed and without which there are no checks upon the power of the state.

And for obvious and concomitant reasons, perhaps, I believe conservative thought will turn increasingly in this direction as well. If one does wish to defend and to enlarge the scope of action of the strong and self-reliant individual, one has to confront the fact that such individuals must be shaped in families and in human networks, otherwise they just don't happen. Otherwise the lonely, solitary individual becomes simply part of the lonely crowd, battered about by the power of the mass media and the government. So from



both the conservative and liberal direction, and I don't mean in terms of convergence but in terms of concentration of attention, I believe the subject matter that we are considering today, the family, and also other mediating institutions, will move higher on the public agenda. They **have** to, for the survival of everything we stand for.

Now, the second part of my remarks will consist in answering the question, "Why the family?". I could say much about the other institutions, but I'd like to say a few words about why the family is central. And again, trinitarian to the bitter end, I try to make three points. (I find that even if I don't have three points, they become three points. I'm not sure why, but I think there is a natural structure of the human mind around the number three, otherwise, why would there be three strikes, three outs and so forth?).

The first point I want to make, then, in answer to "Why the family?", is that the future of the human race so utterly depends on the family and upon those members of society willing to take part in the nourishment of children. Not all are. Under conditions of medicine in the last few decades – the cycle of fertility in women was only discovered in the 1930's, that is, our whole sense of what happens in the conception of generations has come in our lifetime and in the great explosion of knowledge about procreation, we have gained a certain control over procreation. Very suddenly. One result of that is that not everybody needs to have a family. "Increase and multiply and fill the whole earth," we were enjoined. Well, I think we can turn in all good conscience to the Lord and say, "Lord, I think we've done that." Of all the commandments we've done best on that one. The obligation that weighs upon the human race therefore is not quite so severe now, and it's felt differently by individuals, really.

Now I do add a little caveat here. I have formulated what I call **the law of the inverse effect of zero population growth**. When you talk on a college campus now, many students, at least publicly, whatever their private selves are – one of the features of modern life is that we frequently present ourselves with modern sophisticated ideas in our heads and keep very secret what our hearts are feeling – publicly, many students are quite uncertain about whether they want to marry, and are speculating whether if they do marry they should have children. If you speak to them in favour of marriage, and above all in favour of children, their mouths gape. They've never heard such an approach. So some feel quite personally, quite individually, a resistance to family life and to children. Consequently, we do see the achievement of zero population growth. But its inverse effect is to substitute dogs, kittens, gerbels, monkeys

and pythons for children in the homes of the single, the childless, and other zero homes. The multiplication of pets, especially in the United States, is staggering. What we are not having in children we are having in pets and so I doubt that we have achieved zero population growth; only of the human of the species.

In any case, the first answer I want to make to "Why the family?" is this – unless we have children, there isn't any future. It's very simple. And unless we have children who are brought up in environment with a certain quality, the promise of our future is much diminished. And, therefore, we have to pay special attention to those members of society, even if it is not all members of society, who do take up the task of the future. Who do nurture children. We have an absolutely profound interest in what is done by such citizens. More so than in what is done by other citizens who choose not to have families.

The second point is that the advances of science over the last 30 years in their investigations into every manner of human behaviour, as such behaviour springs from the family, have in every case shown that the family is even more important than we had imagined. Everything we have learned in every field of science compels our recognition of the centrality and the importance of family and of what happens in it. If you talk about nutrition, we discover that not only does it matter what mother and father feed the child, it matters what the mother was eating during pregnancy. It's certain that if proteins and other nutritional values were not there, brain damage can result. Nerve damage. And many other types of damage.

We discover that I.Q. is very much affected by the kind of activity that surrounds the infant. I remember paying a second baby-sitter, one for our oldest son and one for our second one, a daughter, because at that time she was passive and withdrawn. We hired a baby-sitter to do nothing but entertain this little child, to keep her active, keep her laughing, keep her moving, keep her interested in things. I believe those things have effect. We know they have effect, both emotionally and intellectually.

We know that if you teach your children how to identify letters and how to sound those letters with their lips, and how to identify those sounds and shapes with letters on a printed page, and how to combine those letters into words, and how to identify words, they learn how to read even before they go to school. Our little four year old is presently excited when she identifies

short words on the page. She is so intensely proud; never will she be so intensely proud of herself again as she is now, about every word she picks out. When children already know such things when they begin school, it's easy to teach them and it's a joy to teach them. And if they don't know such things, it's exceedingly difficult to teach them in the schools. If they know the basics of computation, and I don't mean just know the rudiments, but I mean having a desire to know, having a sense of the fun and excitement of knowing and of learning; if they are, as we say, **motivated**, it's very easy for teachers. If children don't come out of the family with such appetites, what can teachers do? It's exceedingly difficult.

Now in my parent's generation, I think it's fair to say, they knew far less. They didn't know that our mental health depended on how they toilet trained us, how they distributed their emotions among us. They didn't know that our mental health, and our moral habits, and our nutrition, and our brain cells, and our I.Q., and everything else depended on what they had to do. They just did it. They didn't even read Dr. Spock. They did what had been done for thousands of years. Bill Cosby, the comedian, says that when he was eleven years old his family had nine children and until he was eleven, he thought his name was "shut up." Our parents didn't know what they were doing, they didn't know all the ways they could be failing. They didn't know how responsible they could be for the disasters we turned into.

If you want one simple reason, one direct reason why there is now so much antagonism toward family, and toward having children, I think it may be directly related, although unconsciously related, to how much we now know about the importance of family and children. It's terrifying to know in how many ways you can fail. And I would say that, quite vividly, I have learned nothing so much in being a father, as a steady and persistent sense of failure. I never seem to understand exactly what is on the children's mind until it's too late, and I always bawl them out on occasions when I realize afterwards that that was not the time to do it. And I let them get away with murder that I don't recognize as murder until it's been done. I find myself second-guessing myself. Usually, I think accurately enough, I'm just wrong. I spent my whole childhood being intimidated by the look in the eye of my father and I seem to be spending my whole adulthood being intimidated by the look in the eyes of my children. The most persistent experience of being a parent today is of being a failure. It is no wonder that we should want to avoid having a family. Figuring that it might be too trying. That it might be too emotionally draining. Because we know precisely, through science, how many ways we can fail.

Now let me add just one more point here: In terms of care for the young, for the needy and for the elderly, we've also learned that if the family performs those tasks well, there is no need for state intervention. We've learned that it can be done infinitely cheaper if it's done by the family. In New York State where I'm from, it costs as much as \$11,000, \$12,000 and even \$16,000 a year to care for a child in various state homes. The same for the care for the elderly, or the retarded, per person. Now a family can take care of many such persons in the family's own midst, far more cheaply than that. For an additional \$1,000 or \$2,000 or \$3,000. And often the family does not get that additional help. It does its work by dividing what it already has. Not only can this be provided more cheaply by the family, but it can also be provided with a quality of affection that you cannot pay for. That no price in the world commands. And by affection and care when I speak of the family, I do not mean – I repeat – NOT mean love and tenderness. Much of what one gets in the family is, in fact, hostility, abrupt disagreement. I know how much my father and his brother cared for each other because I remember so vividly the alternate years in which they weren't speaking to each other. Family love is by no means tender. In fact, I believe that in this modern age in which we are so mobile and in which we can choose our own friends, so that when we go to parties or go out in the evening, it's by and large with people we know and like and with whose ideas we agree, the only place remaining in such a society where diversity is brought together, where you can sit down at the dinner table with people you abhor, whose opinions you cannot tolerate, and whose views on society you cannot stomach is with the family on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. The family is the only place in society where people from different social classes and different backgrounds still are obliged to get together. Otherwise, we live in homogeneous little enclaves, quite separate from one another.

Well, the third point I want to make “Why the family?” is a more difficult one and it has to do with what we are coming to learn about the **moral** quality of married life, first, and family life, second. Let me talk about the importance for the soul of marriage. I would argue that one of the most important motivations – motivations in the sense of being structural, one of the things that's there – for marriage is the ruthless and relentless honesty and realism that one encounters in another partner. For after a very short period of time, a spouse refuses to be taken in by one's various games and moves and postures, and insists, however one dislikes it, on exposing them. If you do not like honesty, if you do not like someone telling you exactly why you're chewing your lip as you are, or why you're taking that tone of voice again, or why



you're playing that role again, don't get married. The great moral advantage of being married is that you cannot get away from yourself. There's that other person pinning you with all your familiar moves. Things you did, even as a little child – looks, little humble glances, bluffs –after seeing them a few times, a spouse sees through and, worse, insists on telling you so. Even your children tell you. In terms of the moral possibilities, you couldn't buy that sort of attention. You can't stand it. Very difficult to live with, but of an enormous moral value. Penetrating one's illusions through the eyes of another, close enough to know what they are, whose interests are deeply at stake in those illusions. It's not like living with a friend or a roommate who has an interest in presenting the better side of you to yourself. It's much more desperate and dangerous than that. Both partners are basically struggling for survival – a kind of survival. And often being very harsh with one another. It's a very demanding life, married life, and this constitutes an enormous moral asset, I think, too little stressed. It's important to stress it because on the other side, contemporary liberties what we call liberation, the continually self-liberating life, can be a form of "kid-ship". It is really possible in our society, which invented teen-agers in the post-World-War I period (once we passed child labour legislation we invented teen-agers, and after World War II, we started building college campuses every two weeks and we invented "twenty-hood"; and given the power of unemployment insurance we've also now contributed to "thirty-hood") – it's quite possible to go on up into your thirties never holding a permanent job, receiving unemployment cheques in Arizona, working for twenty-some weeks and then taking off. It's possible to be a kid forever. We look 10 years younger than we are, all of us, if you look at pictures of previous generations. The ravages of age told much more quickly on them. But not only do we look like kids, we act more and more like kids. And there are not a few kids aged 50 around. You don't have to grow up. What I'm trying to say is that one of the beauties in modern freedom is that you do not have to grow up, you do not have to accept the normal responsibilities, or what we considered the normal responsibilities for the human race, until quite recently; economic responsibility, sexual and familial responsibility. You can evade these. Now I'm not trying to say we should take these away. I'm trying to argue that it is well worth pointing out to those who are concerned about moral growth and about maturing under adverse conditions, that marriage and the having of children is an extraordinary asset. A painful assistance in the process of maturing.

Finally, not to go on too long, I'll go to the third series of remarks I'd like to make about the relationship of the family and the state and I'd like to think of

these for the moment as **the family against the state**. I think that's the most accurate way to bracket the actual circumstance at the moment. We need, I think, to make room for the family and we have to do it against the state and by the state here, I don't mean only the government itself but the culture, too. That almost quasi-official culture, such things as television, and the ideology within which our children grow up and in which we ourselves must grow up. I love – I presume you see Sonny and Cher on television – I love Cher, nice girl, but I wouldn't want my children to be like her; wouldn't like one of my sons to marry her – even if it would be only for a short time! And I feel that way about many celebrities – I mean, they're lovely folk to visit, interesting. But you don't want their values, you don't want their way of life, you don't want their attitudes imitated by your children. But where can you go? Where can you hide your children? Where can you put them? The pressures of the world are everywhere. More than they ever were. Even the mere task of instructing your children in certain values and in a certain way of life leaves you feeling as if you are swimming against the tide.

I want to remark that there are many kinds of families. Perhaps that doesn't need stressing, yet we must not think that there is one sort of family. It is true that in the little books we read in school families were always named . . . Brown, Green, simple names – they always had two children and a dog Spot. But probably you grew up in a neighbourhood where there were only Antonellis and you didn't know any people named Brown or Green and you didn't know any families with only two children and you didn't know any dog Spot, and the style of inter-relationship was different.

Both the United States and Canada are composed of more than 100 cultures each. In the United States, the number is closer to 138. (There's some doubt whether to count Texas as a different culture.) One of the differentiating points of a culture is that particular complex chemistry of family life, within which male and female roles are understood differently and relationships between parents and children and the demonstration of emotions, on along different lines. In some families certain emotions are inhibited and in others, the same emotions are encouraged. And so forth. So it is very important when thinking about the family to remember that we are talking about an analogous reality: in some ways different, in many different cultures. We mustn't imagine we can get it all straight by thinking in the terms of one culture only.

The second point is, the hostility of the environment. We encourage mobility

and the movement of people, as though that were automatically a sign of progress, without counting the cost. Particularly for the woman, particularly for the children, but also for the male. And in only recent times, corporations, universities, and other major organizations, sent their members rather casually across the continent. They are beginning to reconsider whether the human being is rather like a plant, more than we had imagined. Much more a rooted creature, who needs roots, and who cannot actually bear these transplantations without losing all moral bearings. It may very well be true that if you've been uprooted three or four times, and seen that things are done very differently in other parts of the world, your instincts become very confused, and that in difficult cases, you no longer know what is moral or what is right. You've no reference group you can count on, you never know when to trust your head and when to trust your heart. And that means that in a crisis, in a critical condition, you can be easily swayed when you might not otherwise have been swayed. I think this is what happened to many of those involved in Watergate. They were independent of any constituency and nobody thought, "Hey, wait a minute, you cannot do this." Everybody was in a habit of thinking, "This is the way it is done here and we just have to do it." And there wasn't any raised eyebrow in the back of their conscience. (A good friend of mine used to say (that) when the Pope was trying to make up his mind about birth control, everybody imagined that he was consulting theologians, reading great tomes, studying a thousand years of history "No", he said, "He was sitting by himself saying, 'What would my mother say?' "). This is what I call the raised-eyebrow factor. A most important moral factor. Not always the most decisive and not always right, it does make you stop and look from another point of view. And think through emotionally what it is you're doing, even if you decide to do it differently from ours, we can't always follow the advice of our parents. They're sometimes wrong and so the raised-eyebrow is not always decisive. But it's always important.

Finally, then, what to do? I'm going to have to be very brief. **Concentrate attention on the mediating institutions.** That's the main thesis I'm trying to lay out. Secondly, **beware of the state;** be very careful when the state assumes the roles of any of the mediating institutions; that it does not do more harm than good. There is what I call the principle of over-protection, that is to say, that if the government begins to assume the role of a subsidiary agency it often ends up not helping that agency, but suffocating it. I've just had a cast taken off my leg – a hip cast – it's only been on five weeks and that left leg, whose muscles have not been used for only five weeks, is at least three inches or maybe four inches or five inches smaller than the other leg.



Within a period of five weeks. That's what I mean. If the government puts on a cast in order to strengthen and support the muscles and the muscles are not functioning for themselves, they just decay.

Now, I think the proper way to think about the government with respect to the family is that the government role is often crucial because we live in a highly industrial and technical society in which long-range decisions are made in a long-range way, so the government necessarily becomes involved in the family. I don't think there is any way to say the government shouldn't be. It is. If the government puts a thru-way in here and moves certain homes, that has an effect. If it puts its energy on high level technology, that affects families. The government is involved in families – there's no way it's not going to be. But in order to strengthen the family, under the new circumstances, it's very important that the government role be indirect, in the way that a novelist's role, with characters in the novel, must be indirect. If the novelist moves the characters in the novel too directly, the characters are wooden; they cease to live; there is no life and vitality. If the novelist **enables** the characters, gives them freedom and autonomy of their own, if they become agents in overcoming suffering; the characters live. (No novelist would ever try to remove suffering from the world, though there are governments that mistakenly try to do that. With the obvious tragic result.) If the novelist allows his characters freedom and autonomy, and allows them to be agents, the novel lives. And the same thing is true in society. The role of a creator on society has to be quite indirect. It has to be an enabling role. What one must do is to provide liberty for families. And as in a novel, liberty means possible failure. You can't prevent failures. The minute you try to remove all evils from the world, you bring to bear a tremendous power of coercion. You couldn't eliminate all the evils in the world without putting a soldier behind everybody at all hours, at all times, and that itself would generate an evil even more vast.

Thirdly, there is a tremendous amount of creative thinking that can go into the economic order. Both here and in the United States, in Europe and in free countries, generally, there is a tremendous problem with unemployment. It comes out of our very success, I believe. If you have prison systems and forced labour, if you have a Gulag Archipelago, there's no problem with unemployment. If you have a free society (and a free society means that people will quit their jobs when they care to, and they will move from place to place, and they will go into and out of the labour force, and there's unemployment insurance to pick them up when they're not), there's going to



be tremendous unemployment. Particularly, if you continue to encourage women across the board to go back to work. Women did work for many generations, and now millions are beginning to go back into the economic order in this new form. They are doing so at a rate of over a million a year in the United States, and this means that a million jobs more a year must be found. At the same time they are often competing with their children, who are finishing school, in the same job market.

To be brief, it becomes important to conceive of new ways in which the work might be spread. Isn't it within our reach to imagine job cycles of five or six hours a day, from 9 until 2 which both men and women, many of them, would find quite attractive? It seems it's not beyond the boundary of government or industry to imagine new ways of sharing the work. New ways of developing alternative modules of work that would do much for family.

And, similarly, many other acts of imagination of that sort can be conducted. The new political philosophy that I'm arguing for has one basic principle which may be stated this way – of any social policy, ask, "Is it good for the family? What does it do to the family?". These are not questions often asked. Everybody agrees and all our knowledge tells us that if we injure the family we injure the whole culture. If children come out of families with mental health problems, with I.Q. problems, with learning problems, it's exceedingly expensive and difficult, and almost impossible, for the society to put them back together again. You can have a caretaker society, you can hardly have a health-giving society. We're very concerned, if you read the papers at all, about the perishing of seals and whales and wet lands, and we should be. But it would be very odd indeed if our future political battles were not more and more fought out on the terrain of caring for the family. We must be figuring out what penalizes and makes life difficult for the family. And in inventing new ways to make it easier for the family to be itself, and to do its own important work well.

I thank you very much.









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